Christian Courier

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JANUARY 13, 1995/NO. 2426

Controversial Philippines bill to control 'religious' votes

Josil C. Gonzales

MANILA, Philippines (NNI) —The Senate of the Philippines has temporarily deferred final approval of a controversial bill that would allow religious leaders to dictate to their followers which political candidates or party to support.

The December 5 deferment was the result of a rally held in front of the Senate building by evangelical and charismatic Christian groups opposed to the proposed bill. The leaders of the rally were later invited to a dialogue with the Senate leadership, headed by Senate President Edgardo Angara.

Following the dialogue, the controversial bill was referred back to the committee on electoral reforms. Angara also told the committee to conduct more public hearings on the measure.

The additional hearings are expected to conclude by the end of this month. Supporters want the bill approved before the coming national elections in May. However, the bill is opposed by a broad coalition of Protestant and Catholic organizations.

Bill favors sect

The proposed Bill Number 11398, authored by Representative Leonardo Perez and supported by the majority of the House of Representatives, is seen by many groups to mostly benefit Iglesia ni Cristo, a Protestant-based sect of about two million members, whose votes politicians woo every election.

If approved, the proposed legislation would allow religious leaders to influence their members into voting for a political candidate or party, as long as it is part of their religion's observance of "unity and discipline."

Mainline Protestant groups consider Iglesia ni Cristo (Church of Christ) a cult. The group denies the deity of Christ and teaches that salvation is through the church.

On December 11 and 12, the social action group Kilosbayan — one of the main organizers of the rally — published a two-part article in a Manila newspaper detailing its arguments against the bill.

"Election in a democracy should be an exercise of individual conscience ('one person-one vote'), instead of a religious monopoly by a group or several groups ('one

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God creates music

Last week's CC carried a story on the back page about chaplain Harry Kuperus's work in the Mewburn Veterans Centre in Edmonton. Belatedly we received this picture showing Mike Chapman, who was wounded in France during the Second World War, playing the mouth organ. The picture was taken on June 6, 1994, after the Mewburn community remembered D-Day. "One of the joys of chaplaincy is that God is there creating music and community," writes Kuperus, pictured on the right, "even when all the material things of life have become 'vanity of vanities.'"

COURTESY HARRY KUPERUS

Contractors hope to donate $1 million to Christian school

Jane Ouwehand

CHILLIWACK, B.C. — The Upper Valley Christian Building Society plans to donate $1 million over the next five years towards the building of a new Christian High School in Chilliwack. The money will come from the profits of two development projects.

Contractor Dick Westeringh is confident that it can be done: in 1993 the building society raised $1.3 million, donating $500,000 to a building project of the Chilliwack Free Reformed Church, and the rest to other charities. "We were amazingly blessed," Westeringh says, "It exceeded our expectations for sure."

Current plans are to generate $700,000 from a condominium complex in Okanagan Falls on Lake Skaha, and $300,000 from 14 ranch style homes in Harrison Hot Springs. In the Harrison project the funding and the profits will be split 50/50 with the contractors and the Christian Building Society.

Dick Westeringh

Tax-free profit

The contractors involved are Ron Haan of Woodspan Development, John Neels of Pro Span Construction and Dick Westeringh of Westbow Group of Companies. The advantage of working through the society is that the profit can be donated to the chosen charity tax-free. As a business or an individual one can only donate 20 per cent tax-free, while the other 80 per cent is taxed at a rate of 56 per cent.

Westeringh enjoys working in this way with Christians from various churches: it builds friendship and trust, and is a wonderful way to witness to the community, he says. "The Body of Christ has many members. I am in this business. I understand it. I can help in this capacity."

Westeringh first heard of the Lake Skaha property while visiting his brother-in-law on vacation. Since it was the only available lakefront property on Lake Skaha, and since the owner was in a position to sell immediately, Westeringh decided to inquire. The property turned out to be large enough for 28 condominium units. He offered $620,000, and the owner accepted before Westeringh returned home.

Some of the features which the Lake Skaha resort will offer are a sandy beach, dock, a security fence around the building and parking lot, an interior courtyard, two guest suites, and skiing nearby at Mt. Apex.

A little optimistic?

When asked to comment about the real estate market, realtor Corney Les of ReMax notes that "in general, the market is soft right now, and has been for 18 months. But recreational is different; per-

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News

Project is 'an acceptable risk'

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haps it has just begun." Les has observed a trend by wealthy businesspeople. They use two residences year-round, living four days in the city, then flying to their resort home for weekends.

But of the Christian Building Society, Les says, "I think they're a little optimistic in their numbers." He notes that if the interest rates rise even a point or two, potential buyers will defer their purchasing until the rates are more favorable.

Westeringh admits that there is a risk but he feels it is an acceptable risk. "As long as there are people who want lakefront property we're OK," he says. The Lake Skaha Resort project "caters to the affluent. A one per cent or even a five per cent rise in interest rates won't matter to them because they have the money. It's like a toy to them. It's not something they need: it's something they want."

A few potential buyers have already expressed interest. He hopes to begin building in January so that people can start to buy in early summer.

Looking for investors

Part of the success of the Lake Skaha and the Harrison projects will be finding investors within the Christian school community. Neal TeBrinke, a board member of the Upper Valley Christian Building Society, indicated on Dec. 28 that $975,000 had already been loaned or pledged for a one-year term at 10 per cent. The society had been looking for a total of $1.1 million from supporters by Dec. 31: the rest would be borrowed from the bank.

When asked what would happen if they did not raise the full amount by Dec. 31, TeBrinke said they would have the option of delaying or borrowing from the bank or private investors at a higher rate.

TeBrinke says reaction has been mixed. "Certain people are worried they're going to lose their money. You have to have a little faith," he says. "These contractors have a good track record."

Other people have gone out to loan money to support the cause, figuring that the interest they earn will cover what they have to pay to take out the loan. He notes that those who have come to a meeting to hear the facts and see the display have generally supported it.

Tobacco control aimed at teens

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — Ontario's hard-hitting Tobacco Control Act came into effect November 30. Aimed at reducing smoking, especially among young people, the legislation is among the toughest in North America.

According to the 1994 annual report of Ontario's chief medical officer of health, tobacco is still the leading cause of cancer, despite decades of public health warnings. Tobacco use accounts for 25 per cent of all fatal cancers, and is said to kill more than 13,000 annually in the province.

The Tobacco Control Act is part of a provincial strategy to prevent tobacco use, protect the public from second-hand smoke and help smokers quit. The law focuses particularly on young people. Smoking among Grade 7 students in Ontario has increased 50 per cent since 1991 — a staggering reversal after eight years of decline. Most smokers begin smoking in childhood or adolescence. By age 17, three-quarters of them have become addicted.

The new law will discourage tobacco use, particularly among young people. It makes it illegal to sell or supply tobacco to anyone under 19. It bans tobacco sales from vending machines, and prohibits the sale of so-called "kiddie" packs containing fewer than 20 cigarettes. Health facilities and pharmacies are not allowed to sell tobacco.

Smoking is not allowed anywhere at facilities used by young people, such as schools, day nurseries and children's hospitals. Smoking is also prohibited in a wide range of public places, such as stores, financial institutions, video arcades, laundromats, hair salons and barber shops, and public transit shelters and stations. Even in places where smoking may be permitted in designated areas (such as in hospitals, shopping malls, colleges and universities) signs with smoking restrictions must be clearly posted.

Report on abuse prevention goes to Toronto CRC classis

Robert VanderVennen

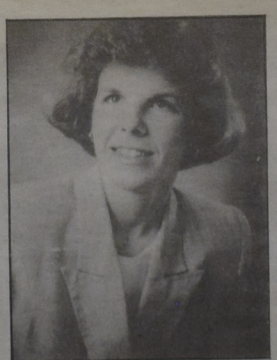
TORONTO, Ont. — A 25-page report is being presented to Classis Toronto of the Christian Reformed Church at a public meeting on Wednesday evening, January 25, at the Second CRC of Brampton, Ont. Beth Swagman, new co-ordinator of abuse prevention for the CRC, is expected to address the meeting.

In May Classis Toronto appointed a seven-person committee chaired by Mary VanderVennen to advise classis and its member congregations in response to requests from several churches for help with policies on abuse prevention. The committee was asked to "develop guidelines for all church ministry workers that focus on the prevention of abuse as well as protection from abuse in the church," to develop guidelines for reporting abuse and to prepare recommendations to guide the church's ministry to victims and perpetrators of abuse.

Develop an abuse policy

The committee is recommending that each church should develop and prominently display its policy on abuse, should require mandatory reporting of abuse and the screening of staff and volunteers.

A code of ethics is being suggested, and each church is urged to set up a comprehensive educational program targeting all aspects of the abuse issue. Churches are asked to "continue to struggle with the best ways to model equality, healthy gender identity, biblically sound role formation and non-violent means of resolving conflict."



COURTESY BETH SWAGMAN

Beth Swagman leads the Christian Reformed Church's abuse prevention program.

Classis Toronto is also asked to appoint a "Classical Response Team" to help congregations deal with charges of abuse which may surface in a congregation. Such a team would give advice to churches faced with charges of abuse by a pastor or other staff member.

A public meeting has been called for discussion of this report with its recommendations. Invitations to the meeting have been given to neighboring CRC classes, and the public is invited.

Swagman began her service to the denomination in November, coming from a position with Bethany Christian Services in Holland, Michigan. She has many years of experience dealing with victims and perpetrators of abuse, and has helped congregations and CRC classes in western Michigan train people to respond to abuse. She is a social worker and a deacon, and her book on abuse prevention in churches, *Too Close for Comfort*, has been published by CRC Publications.

Elections an exercise of individual conscience

...continued from page 1

religious bloc-one vote')," the article stated.

"The reason for requiring votes to be cast in secrecy is to protect the individual's right to vote according to the dictates of his own conscience, not according to the dictates of one supreme head or a council of bishops and ministers," the article added.

Kilosbayan is headed by a popular politician, former Senate President Jovito Salonga, who is also the son of a Protestant minister.

Influential Manila Roman Catholic Archbishop Jaime Sin has also publicly opposed the bill, saying "each voter must be allowed to choose as freely as he [or she] wishes."

Sin was quoted by the Philippine Star newspaper as challenging backers of the bill to "examine their consciences" to be sure they had no "vested interests" in supporting the legislation.

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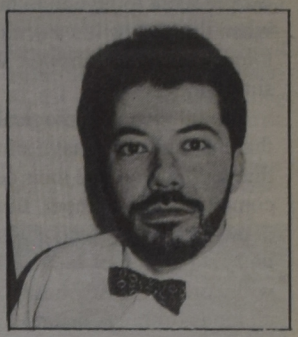
Politics/Medicine

Whither U.S. politics?

POLITICS

David Koyzis



This month the United States sees what might be considered a change of government in another type of political system. Bill Clinton remains president, of course, but after the Republican sweep of the House of Representatives and Senate last November, his ability to govern will be drastically curtailed. The man of the hour is longtime Georgia congressman Newt Gingrich, whose face has recently appeared on the covers of American newsweeklies nearly as often as O.J. Simpson's appeared last summer. Gingrich now becomes Speaker of the House of Representatives — a position whose true importance is masked by a neutral-sounding title.

Unlike Canada's Speaker of the House of Commons, who simply presides over its business while wearing a mantle of non-partisan neutrality, the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives has historically been a powerful figure who is effectively leader of his party in the lower house of Congress.

President could be a figurehead

Former President Woodrow Wilson, himself an academic political scientist and past president of Princeton University, likened the Speaker to a prime minister who is potentially more powerful than the president himself, at least on the domestic front. At several stages in American constitutional history, the president could have become a mere figurehead "monarch" with the Speaker actually setting the nation's policy agenda. With his vaunted "Contract with America," Gingrich clearly envisions himself filling the Speaker's prime ministerial shoes.

Two years ago in this space I wrote that President Clinton would have to take advantage of a fairly brief window of opportunity if he expected to accomplish the goals set forth during his election campaign. I also observed that the fact that Congress was controlled by Clinton's own Democratic Party would not necessarily guarantee a favorable reception for his proposals.

Indeed, while Clinton has had some successes (more than most people know about), his failures are perhaps more memorable. When his promised health care reform died last fall, his presidency suffered a blow from which it has not recovered. Add to this the continual questions over the Whitewater scandal, the sexual harassment charges and the sea change in Congress, and Clinton seems likely to accomplish little in his last two years in office.

'Grid lock' could continue

But will Gingrich and his fellow Republicans do any better? Will they be any more effective than Clinton? The relative lack of party discipline in Congress means that senators and representatives will likely vote as they think best, paying some attention to partisan labels, but much more to the people back in their home districts and states, as well as to interest group lobbyists on Capitol Hill.

But even if the Republicans succeed in getting their act together and putting forward a coherent program commanding the support of all of their members in the House and Senate, Clinton still possesses the power to veto legislation coming to the Oval Office. As president he is unlikely simply to retire to the shadows and let the Republicans govern for the next two years. This means more "gridlock" — the press' current label for the on-going impasse between the White House and Capitol Hill that continues to plague American politics and has kept voters frustrated and angry.

What will all this mean for the 1996 presidential election? If voters become dissatisfied with both the Democrats and Republicans, where will they turn? Many, of course, will stay home and add to the already high abstention rate of past elections. But perhaps they will find it necessary to consider instituting more fundamental changes in the American system. I will take these up in a future column.

David T. Koyzis teaches political science at Redeemer College, Ancaster, Ont.

Genetic screens for cancer developed

BALTIMORE, Md. (Johns Hopkins Medical Letter) — Currently, the best chance for beating cancer is early detection. To this end, the American and Canadian cancer societies advise people over 50 to go for regular screening tests to detect colorectal cancer, and mammograms, to detect breast cancer.

But genetic testing may soon be able to predict cancer before it starts, and its use is expected to increase ten-fold over the next decade.

Two discoveries last year — of the genes that cause hereditary colon cancer, and of those that cause hereditary breast cancer — have catapulted genetic science into a bigger arena.

The genetic code

Genes are inherited sequences of DNA (the basis of all life), which reside in the nucleus of every human cell.

Sometimes, mutations in parent genes result in congenital defects (disorders that one is born with). Other times, genetic defects are acquired, due to mistakes that can occur during DNA replication, as cells grow and divide.

A single faulty gene is rarely the "smoking gun" for disease. Only three per cent of all human diseases are caused by defects in a single gene; most result from a combination of defects caused by both hereditary and environmental factors.

Cancer is essentially a genetic disease. It occurs when the genes that control cell growth and development mutate, so that cells start to multiply out of control. These mutations can be acquired due to environmental causes (such as smoking), or can be inherited. In most cases, a single mutation is not sufficient to cause cancer, though it may predispose someone to it.

Clinical trials of genetic screens for the more-common cancers are now under way for those with a family history of the disease. Most people with hereditary genetic diseases will acquire them when they are young. By determining early in life a hereditary predisposition to cancer, a genetic test can pinpoint those who will benefit from establishing regular screening regimens — such as periodic colonoscopies or mammographies, so that cancer can be caught early (sometimes even in a premalignant stage), and hopefully be cured.

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Editorial

Being a 'thing person' doesn't make sense

A young friend of mine once asked me why people seem to give in to materialism so much when they know it's a dead-end street. That's a tough question to answer. Why do people do stupid things?

I could give a theological answer and say that human beings have sinful inclinations and that loving God and their neighbors does not come naturally to them. But that's not the kind of answer my friend wanted. She wanted to understand, for example, why it is that people will work extremely hard to be able to afford all kinds of things that don't make them happy. It doesn't make sense, she said.

She's absolutely right. It doesn't make any sense at all. But as always, there is a system to the madness. Let me explain.

When I grew up as a kid in Holland, we used to live in a paper bag... (no, it wasn't that bad) — we were used to very little in terms of toys, clothes, candies and entertainment. That was not only because of the war years. The standard of living measured by income and availability of goods was much lower in the '30s and '40s than it would be a decade after World War II. Also, the whole culture, strongly influenced by Christian principles and values, demanded a sober lifestyle.

Evil is as incomprehensible as it is reprehensible.

Conformity, then as well as now, was a potent force. Even the upper classes expected a fair bit of restraint from their members. It was difficult to be a materialist in a non-consumerist society. The little money we were given as kids we were expected to save in the bank, piggy or otherwise. We were well trained in "waste not, want not." I remember getting two guilders from my parents to spend while on a school trip and coming back with one guilder, for Pete's sake! I had taken pride in not having spent it all!

Waste now, want later

Today's kids grow up in a different millieu. Their appetites and that of their parents are constantly whetted. Conformity demands that we purchase as much as everybody else. Advertising reminds us of needs we never knew we had. Kids have plenty of money to spend and are into expensive brand-name shoes and clothing. The culture is comfortable with a "consume now, pay later" mentality. Christian values are being bleached out of the fabric of life. Obsolescence and changing fashions keep us hooked on the production lines of multinational corporations. Citizens in countries all over the world are consuming the same products at the same time.

Growing up in a consumerist society is like being awakened too early sexually. Once the sexual urges are awakened, it's hard to put them back to sleep. A premature awakening does not bode well for a chaste life later. The same could be said about unrestrained consumption of goods. If you grow up in an environment that constantly invites you to consume and spend, you will find it hard not to when you're older. Consumption then becomes an end in itself.

Powerless without the Holy Spirit

That's the system in the madness. It explains the *how*, but not the *why*. Why are we so stupid that we starve the soul and feed first our desires and appetites? The *why* inevitably returns us to the spiritual level because it's a spiritual question.

I believe the soul has always had a hard time getting the proper attention, ever since humankind's fall into sin. Even in a non-consumerist society one can be modestly materialistic. As kids we jealously guarded the few possessions we did have and were not eager to share with others. Most of our parents were the same way when it came to helping the poor in the village. No significant partings with possessions took place, as a rule. Our materialism was qualitative rather than quantitative.

The main reason for this clinging to things has to do with the absence of the Holy Spirit in human lives. Vacuums don't exist very long in the world. The same is true for our souls. If the holy spirit of Jesus does not live in our house on legs, other unholy spirits will. Without the Holy Spirit our human spirits are powerless against the attractions of the world and the sinful desires of our hearts. Only with the help of the Holy Spirit can we put on the armor of God and take our stand against the devil's schemes.

Evil remains a mystery

In a way even this answer does not fully satisfy the puzzled mind. It still is a mystery why people are foolish enough to seek their own ultimate destruction when God is so close they can touch him. Has anyone ever really understood suicide?

Evil will never make sense, no matter how long we analyze it. The movie *Bridge on the River Kwai* ended with an American officer lamenting that the evil of war was all madness.

When I was a college student, I wrote the following verse:

Man is the undisputed heir
Of Adam's guilt and Eve's despair:
A labyrinth of human pride
That keeps the scholar occupied.

Cute, *and* surprisingly profound, if I may say so myself.

It's noteworthy that the Mother of prostitutes, Babylon the Great, who was riding the scarlet beast of Revelation 17, had the word "mystery" written on her forehead. Evil thrives on mystery and secrecy. Evil is as incomprehensible as it is reprehensible.

Let's focus on the latter and flee from it rather than be intrigued by it.

BW

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Letters

Does 'second sex' flow from the text?

Please allow me to respond to the two articles of Al Wolters on Gen. 2:18, particularly to his conviction that "woman in relation to man is 'the second sex.'" It is not clear to me why Al would introduce this very unfortunate phrase into his exegesis of this text. He knows how offensive this term is to modern sensibilities, and yet feels it is part of the message of the Bible.

The question I have been puzzling over is this: Does this phrase really flow from the exegesis that he gives of this text? To say that this text highlights "the equality and complementarity, as well as the unique difference, that define the created relationship of the genders in humankind" is pretty standard exegesis. So is the phrase "indispensable partner." But where does the notion of "second sex" come from, with all its baggage of inferiority and being second-rate?

This question is very important to me, because to be in a relationship of equals is for me a fundamentally different kind of relationship if the other is "second" in some fashion.

An awkward position

Moreover, if women are indeed "the second sex," then I have to conclude that as a man I am a member of the first sex not only in temporal order, but in the sense of being superior, first-rate. That puts men in a very awkward position, and is not without danger. The relationship between men and women is either of equals or of unequals. If women are inherently second-rate, and men are the first gender, then my fear is that some men will use this phrase to patronize and even abuse women.

But I am not persuaded that "second sex" is a phrase born of the exegesis of this text. It does not seem to me to follow from any part of the text or its exegesis, not even from the phrase "with a unique difference."

Also I have a question about Al's insistence that the phrase is demanded by comparing Scripture with Scripture. If the first creation account may not be used to interpret the second, and if all the material in Scripture about redemption and liberation may not be used either to help us understand human relationships, but two texts from Paul may be so used, then Al has in fact put Scripture *against* Scripture. This is probably unavoidable, too, and we do it all the time. The problem arises here when people think they do not do so, because then we tend to provide no criteria for the selection process.

In conclusion, I want to go on record as saying that I do not feel persuaded that this very unfortunate phrase is demanded by the Bible. I would encourage Al and all of us to avoid using this term, and any other terms we know to be offensive.

Allan Groen
Cornwall, Ont.

'Second place is for losers'

By George, I think I've got it! Even in the Bible "second" means *less than* or *inferior to*. At least, that is what Al Wolters tried so hard to get across in the Nov. 25 issue of CC (see "The second sex"). Second will never be first. And it's chronologically later. Therefore second has to be inferior to whatever came before. I can handle that.

That women are less than men, the dears having come second, Wolters and I get straight out of Genesis. It comes, Wolters explained, from the J-source, the (second) account of creation which "represents Eve as coming from and after Adam." It follows that this "teaches female subordination," something that is apparently often argued. And why not, eh? The woman even came *from* the man, imagine!

And so Al Wolters comes to terms "...with the offensive fact that the Bible does portray woman — though a perfect match for man — as in some sense 'the second sex.'"

Whoa! What's with the "in some sense" bit? Out with it, man! Don't weaken now, just when I think we've got it! The perfect match for man is clearly... the *inferior* woman. Let's face it, she *did* come second, and *from* the man.

We hairy macho types have always sort of intuitively known that women were not quite number one. I mean, we can't both be first, right? And we all know that second place is for losers, for wanna-be's, for also-rans, for the little dears. That's why the Bible rings so true to us men: it's so obviously on our side.

I'm with you Al. You're clearly onto something. Go for it, man: tell it like it is. I just find it a bit galling that every guy since Adam came from a woman. And help me get a handle on the Bible calling Christ the *second* Adam.

No rush, of course. It's no biggie. I'd just like to know.

Reinder Klein
Creemore, Ont.

50th anniversary rearview

From an editorial by Paul De Koekkoek in one of the first expanded issues of **The Canadian Calvinist,** *Feb. 15, 1946. (Capital letters and exclamation points were in the original.)*

"YOU DID IT! — Yes, readers, you made the printed and enlarged **Canadian Calvinist** possible. Your favorable comments and financial contributions enabled us to make this progressive move. We know that our entire C.C. 'family' is happy about it....

"As for the C.C., it desires to occupy its own place, in keeping with its own purpose, among its own people, and in its own country. And that, in turn, is calculated to strengthen connections with Calvinists across the borders....

"WHAT THEY SAID — Correspondents told us of late, concerning the C.C.: 'Interesting for young and old!' 'Will gain popularity and support!' 'We here hope and pray that we may have better contact with each other through the paper!' ...'I believe your C.C. can serve a good purpose in unifying the Canadian branch of the Church and in achieving a sense of "growing up" as a church group, I am glad to witness its appearance. It will also undoubtedly acquaint those of us who are on the U.S. side of the line to a richer extent with the growth and progress of our sister churches in Canada....

"WHAT THEY DID IN CASH — Received from Rev. D.W. and 'friends,' Grand Rapids, Mich., $100 and $5 respectively; Hamilton Church, $13; Winnipeg Church, $5; Lacombe Ladies' Aid, $10; A. Postma, La Glace, Alta, $1. Thanks to you all!"

Joining CLAC may not be bad, but there are implications

Thank you for your editorials dealing with the issue of Christian school teachers affiliating with the CLAC.

First some questions: the editorials speak exclusively of the teachers; if the support staff is excluded from this process, where does that leave *them*? Secondly, you mention in one of your case histories that two-thirds of the teachers approached CLAC. Would employees be free to join or to stay out? And what consequences would either option have on the way staff members deal with each other and with management (the principals)? In fact, defining the role of the principal may take some time, but it does seem clear that their status might be determined by labor legislation rather than by our own sense of what is appropriate and prudent.

With "Job's rhetorical question" you tactfully raise the sensitive question of why "committed and high-minded teachers" would join the CLAC. Now, I am sure that staff members would not find it difficult to find persuasive reasons to do so; however, it is my belief that any such step is ultimately the result of a process that is going on in society which, for lack of a better name, I could call a process of alienation. I would not want to single out either teachers or board members for being the cause of this development. Indeed, this may well be an idea whose time has come.

Upon further reflection, I think that the step of Christian school staff affiliating with a union will have other ramifications. Remember that this would turn a group of individuals into a legally constituted corporate body, which is itself subject to law.

This is not necessarily bad, but it ought to be recognized. In Canada, traditions have been formed governing the way we deal with each other, many of them with an appeal to Scripture. Staff members affiliating with a union will create tensions between the way we deal with each other as individuals and the way the law tells us how to deal with each other as corporate entities.

Lastly, there is the important area of determination of salaries, benefits and working conditions. It may well be that, being represented by the union in such discussions, the involvement by staff will become less immediate, less intense, less emotional. And as I write this, I'm drawn to the inevitable conclusion that board members might be happier too if they could avoid that intense involvement by having someone represent *them*.

In conclusion, rather than engage in fruitless recriminations, let staff and board members prepare themselves for a new scenario in labor relations, by redefining certain forms of conduct, lines of responsibility and channels of communication between all stakeholders.

John Woudstra
Edmonton

Economics

Christian education and the economy (Part 3)

Economic Housekeeping

Bert Hielema

Lately I have been musing on the operation mode of modern prophets. These people don't foretell the future — nobody can do that. Their main function is to tell the truth as they see it and then sound the alarm. I guess I qualify as such a person, so here comes my next jeremiad. I suspect that what I recommend is perhaps impossible but....

It is my opinion that young people will face a world very different from ours, a world in which they have to re-invent their lives continuously. We now live in an age of transition, and however difficult it will be, Christian schools must guide our young people to the unknown future — which is what education means literally.

Two hundred years ago most people in the world enjoyed a fairly similar standard of living. The Industrial Age changed that, slowly at first. Even 100 years ago, 50 per cent of our ancestors lived on farms, 25 per cent were servants and maids, and the rest artisans, merchants and factory workers. After World War I the blue-collar class really grew, reaching a peak of 40 per cent of the working force in 1960. The fall of that class has been as dramatic as its rise. Now the blue-collar total is back where it was 100 years ago, signalling the beginning of the end of a great imbalance. This time the scale will tip away from the wealthy West. I'll tell you why.

New equation

The need now, in our post-industrial world, is for "knowledge workers." They are people who combine expert knowledge with good manual skills and are subject to this formula: 1/2 x 2 x 3 = P. This strange equation means that one half of the workforce now employed in any industry will earn two times as much and work twice as hard to produce three times the output which will give global enterprises a world class P for production and profit.

Sophisticated software and ingenious manufacturing methods now make it possible to fabricate most things with small groups of highly skilled people who are continuously replaced or upgraded to stay ahead of ever more labor-saving devices.

The disappearance of manual labor will mean a change in the human condition. It will have far-reaching consequences world-wide as the few well-paying jobs will go wherever the best "knowledge workers" are located. Education will become the centre of the knowledge society, and the school its key institution. There, students mainly need to learn how to learn, as lifelong uninterrupted learning will be a prerequisite for a knowledge worker. The economic poverty of a country will be measured by its degree of ignorance.

'Are we offending God's holiness?'

Of course, knowledge is not the same as wisdom. Wisdom starts with the fear of the Lord, a fear that is on the endangered species list. This lack of wisdom is the reason why this new development has a fatal weakness: it will make real poverty global as governments run out of money. Also, with modern agriculture promoted by GATT, billions of farmers in Africa and Asia will be displaced. They will drift to the cities where they will add immense misery to the overcrowded slums, resulting in more violence, poverty and environmental deterioration.

What must we do as Christian community? Our salvation lies in the proper fear of the Lord. Only when we see both the Scriptures and Creation as holy can we confidently look for solutions. When, in the New Creation, we will look back on our era, we will see that the last century has been a horrible aberration in which an act as simple as switching a light on and off caused a particle of pollution somewhere.

Now that, by the grace of God, a more equal economic balance will be forced upon us in the next decade or so, we are presented with perhaps the last opportunity to fashion a more God-pleasing communal way of life. With every step we take, every decision we make, every purchase we do, we must ask ourselves: "Are we offending God's holiness by our action?"

We, as Christian community, as the people of God, as his 'holy nation,' are called to be holy, as God and his Creation is holy. See Lev. 11:44,45. Unrealistic? Utopian? Not if we believe in the coming of his Kingdom, the New Earth under a New Heaven.

Bert Hielema lives in Tweed, Ont. He is investigating installing a wind generator and active solar heat to make his energy-efficient and passive solar home less dependent in Ontario's nuclear electrical system.

Proud to be a taxpayer

John Hiemstra

"I'm proud to be a taxpaying Albertan," a friend recently confessed. These rare words run counter to the anti-government spirit of our times.

It really is tempting to join the anti-taxation bandwagon. The arguments sound so convincing. We pay too much tax. The government wastes too much money. Government is too big.

Christians often join this chorus and add that their taxes could better be spent on a church, charity, mission, or third-world development project.

Soon it will be income tax season again. How should Christians respond to paying tax?

Give to Caesar

Jesus was once confronted by the anti-tax spirit of his day when some religious leaders came to trap him in his words.

"Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" they asked, "Should we pay or shouldn't we" (Mark 12:13-17)?

They knew the people hated paying taxes to the despised Roman rules. Rome was wicked and the emperor claimed to be a god. Jesus knew that Rome would severely punish those who broke its rules. Yet Jesus taught the way of God, so he surely would not side with Rome.

So Jesus was forced to choose between obeying God and Caesar.

Jesus replied, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's."

The preachers were "amazed at him." As religious leaders, they knew immediately what Jesus meant.

The Scriptures clearly taught that all things belong to the sovereign God. Even government has to obey God. So to give taxes to Caesar was proper precisely because it had a task from God to do.

Paul repeats this point in his letter to the oppressed Christians in Rome. In a doxology reminding his readers of the sovereignty of Jesus, Paul sets the context: "For from him and through him and to him are all things" (Rom. 11:36).

He then goes on to argue that the government is an authority established by God. It has a calling, for the ruler "is God's servant to do you good" (Rom. 13:4). Notably, the Greek word Paul uses for servant is the same one the church translates as "deacon."

"This is why you pay taxes," Paul concludes, "authorities are God's servants who give their full time to governing" (Rom. 13:6).

Governments today

In the time of Jesus and Paul, no doubt Rome disobeyed parts of its task to "do good." But it also performed many crucial functions for the public good. It dealt with criminals, maintained roads, serviced the infrastructure, resolved civil disputes, supported trade and commerce and much more. It made sure society was maintained and integrated into some sort of a fair order.

Governments today also do a mixture of good and evil acts. But why is government really needed today?

You probably have heard of new developments like the 500 TV channel universe, expanding free trade, GATT, mega-stores, new production technologies, the computer Internet. These developments can cause problems of unemployment, dislocation, global warming, poverty and loss of farmland.

Government has the distinct task of developing a legal framework that justly integrates these new developments into our current society. It also needs to help resolve the public problems and conflicts that result in society.

Taxes are crucial if government is to answer God's call to do public justice.

You might object that much of what government does is wrong and we should resist paying so many taxes.

But Christians are no longer an oppressed minority as in the days of Jesus and Paul. We are free to engage in politics. We have little right to complain about taxes if we are not actively supporting Christian political action.

We need groups like Citizens for Public Justice, the Social Action Commission (of the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada) and others to biblically discern what the government's justice task requires. What should our governments be doing in today's world? These Christian groups also need to assess if our tax system is currently raising taxes fairly.

Then we may know whether my friend was right to say, in response to the stories told by a panel of poor families hit by government cutbacks, that he was proud to be a taxpayer.

John Hiemstra teaches political science at the King's University College in Edmonton.

Film Review

Media / Arts

These 'little women' are small in stature only

Little Women

Rated Family
Stars Winona Ryder, Christian Bale, Trini Alvarado, Susan Sarandon, Gabriel Byrne, Kirsten Dunst, Samantha Mathis, Claire Danes
Written by Robin Swicord
Directed by Gillian Armstrong
Reviewed by Marian Van Til

The first film incarnation of Louisa May Alcott's 1868 autobiographical novel *Little Women* occurred in 1933, starring Katherine Hepburn as Alcott's alto-ego, Jo March; it was a superb adaptation, if a product of its time. In 1949, the cast of the second *Little Women* included both Elizabeth Taylor and Peter Lawford. And in 1978 a TV movie included Susan Dey (of "L.A. Law"), Meredith Baxter Birney and *Star Trek's* William Shatner.

Against that fairly illustrious company, this new adaptation of Alcott's enduring story can easily hold its own.

Alcott grew up in a family of transcendentalists — the nonconformist philosophy espoused by Emerson and Thoreau; her father was a colleague of theirs. The Alcotts lived their philosophy. Though poor themselves, they consistently helped the needy; and they viewed women and men as equals. The Alcott daughters were taught, contrary to prevailing attitutes, that they should aspire to using their talents, never assuming that their gender made it unnecessary for them to be educated.

Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* presents the inner lives of herself and her sisters, disguised as the March family of Concord, Massachusetts: Jo, Meg, Beth, Amy — and their mother, "Marmee." (Most of the time their father/husband is away fighting in the Civil War.)

Loving family

The girls have fun together (they dress as men and put on plays in their attic), work together, help each other out of jams, and generally act as family members should (but often don't) act. If their relationship to each other, governed by love and mutual respect, seems a little too good to be true, especially today (there's nary a "dysfunction" in sight), it is, nevertheless, not the kind of relationship that should be foreign to Christian families. It is both that family togetherness and the gentle admonitions and examples urging girls, particularly, to make the most of themselves, that make *Little Women* an excellent movie to watch as a family.

Winter glow

Corny as it sounds, this film has a kind of glow, even though it takes place almost exclusively in snowy New England winters — mid-19th century Massachusetts is beautifully, accurately evoked.

Though there's a deathbed scene, the story is void of profound drama (the book has more depth). The actors make as much of it as they can without overplaying their parts: they make a fine acting ensemble. Susan Sarandon, normally a leading lady, is particularly commendable as Marmee. It's a small part, which she plays with virtually no make-up. (Unfortunately a lot of female stars aren't willing to take such parts. But Sarandon obviously didn't miss the message of Alcott's story.)

Despite their youth and the lack of stature afforded them by Victorian culture, the March women are by no means "little" women.

New wing at ROM excels in its recreation of the past

TORONTO (Canadian Scene) — Should there be any doubt that the Royal Ontario Museum is among the world's great museums, a visit to the latest addition to the building at Bloor and Queen's Park in Toronto would quickly dispel such a notion.

Opened in December, the addition completes the Samuel European Galleries, the north wing of which was opened in 1989. The south wing was made possible through donations from Ernest and Elizabeth Samuel and their family. Ernest Samuel is the grandson of the legendary Sigmund Samuel, who in his lifetime contributed millions of dollars and an enormous collection of Canadian arts and crafts to the museum.

Walking through the new south wing, the visitor literally travels through the history of furnishings and art objects, from 1100 A.D. to 1940. The more than 1,000 pieces displayed are not merely objects in glass cases. There are four entire period rooms and many vignette-like displays showing portions of rooms.

How Shakespeare lived

One highlight is an English bedroom dating back to the time of Queen Elizabeth I of England. The visitor not only sees the room but hears gentle, recorded music of madrigals and dances that Shakespeare and his contemporaries might have enjoyed.

A vignette shows the interior of a Paris house of the 1730s containing two rare armchairs and a matching settee in carved and gilded oak with the original needlework upholstery intact.

The oldest artifact displayed is a wood statue of the Madonna and Child carved in Spain in the 1100s. Austere in execution, it represents the Romanesque period of art and architecture. It is located near the side of a magnificent, ornate, carved oak triptych from Brussels in the 1500s which shows scenes from the infancy of Jesus and was an altar screen in a church. The triptych stands at the centre of the small room that forms the entrance to the south wing and is a compelling invitation to see the remainder of the exhibit.

The ROM's curator-in-charge of the south wing is Dr. Peter Kaellgren, who joined the museum's staff in 1972. A recognized authority in the decorative arts, he, with his staff, has created a gallery which in spite of the magnificence of the works it displays, welcomes the visitor in a friendly fashion. Clearly presented graphics explain such stylistic terms as Mediaval, Rennaissance, Baroque, Rococo, New-Classical and Victorian.

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Ancient turf war continues over operation of Israel's 'holy sites'

Rebekah Scott Schreffler

JERUSALEM (NNI) — On a recent afternoon in Jerusalem a group of Italian lay Franciscans stood near the stone where tradition holds Jesus' body was prepared for burial. They closed their eyes and sent a plaintive hymn echoing through the centuries-old shrine of the Holy Sepulcher.

Up a flight of marble stairs, near an Orthodox altar that marks the site where tradition holds Christ was crucified, a wizened Orthodox nun jumped to her feet. She pulled a wooden mallet from her robe and began rhythmically pounding on a nearby board — the Orthodox version of a bell. She did not stop the pounding until the Catholics stopped their singing.

Thousands of religious pilgrims visit the holy sites of Jerusalem and Bethlehem each year, especially during the Christmas season. Control of these holy shrines has been a well-publicized and contentious issue in the recent peace process between Palestinians and Jews. A centuries-old turf war is continuing in Israel among Christians as well, as different Christian denominations argue about who oversees and maintains the sacred sites of the Christian faith.

Self-interest

The biggest squabbles are centred on the sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, two of Christendom's most important shrines. Priests and religious workers from the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Armenian churches maintain separate altars and services at the churches, and ostensibly run the shrines under a joint operating agreement. Other groups are allowed to keep small altars within, beneath or alongside the major buildings.

Five years ago at the Church of the Nativity, buckets caught raindrops inside the basilica through two winters while church officials argued over who had the right to repair the roof.

Finally, the Israeli government stepped in at the request of the Catholics and Armenians. The Israelis spent about $47,000 to re-plaster, seal and whitewash the domed, cross-shaped roof.

"We decided we couldn't wait any longer...because Christmas and the rains [were] coming," said Elise Shazar, an Israeli spokesperson.

Indeed, the Israelis retain a large stake in seeing that such disputes do not inhibit visitation and worship at the sites: Christians continue to pour into Israel, making up a large portion of the two million tourists who visited the country last year alone. Tourism officials expect that number to hit three and a half million by the turn of the century, as peace takes hold, and more holy sites are reopened in Jordan.

Tour companies are scrambling to create relationships with erstwhile enemies as pilgrims line up to see sites that were closed for years by Israeli-Palestinian violence.

'Like living with in-laws'

Visitors are not usually aware of the conflicts in the places. "They come in, look around, light a candle and jump back on the [tour bus]," said one Israeli guard at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The captain, who preferred to remain anonymous, told NNI that after five years of duty at holy sites, he has witnessed some heated verbal exchanges, but not any overt violence.

"It must be like living in the same house with your in-laws," he said. "You love them; they're your family, but they drive you crazy. I'm just glad they don't have guns."

Irish Presbyterians rejoicing in ceasefire

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (WARC) — The general board of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is rejoicing in the republican and loyalist ceasefires in Northern Ireland. "The evident relaxation of tension on the streets and the clear signs of hope in the community are most welcome," it said.

Following an IRA ceasefire at the end of August 1994, the Combined Loyalist Military Command (CLMC) ceased hostilities on Oct. 13 thus ending 25 years of violence in the province. It had received guarantees in relation to Northern Ireland's constitutional position within the United Kingdom, the CLMC said, and believed that the democratically expressed wishes of the greater number of people in Northern Ireland would be respected and upheld.

The PCI board encouraged people "to move forward in the quest for just and acceptable institutions" and thanked the British and Irish prime ministers for putting Northern Ireland high on their list of priorities. It urged the media to avoid the word "Protestant" to describe loyalist paramilitary groups: this was misleading and unhelpful, and offensive to Protestants worldwide, since 'these people do not speak for the vast majority of Protestants in both parts of Ireland.'

Models of healing and reconciliation from the Corrymeela centre, on Northern Ireland's coast, may be adapted for use with families in Croatia, says Boris Peterlin, director of the Christian Information Service and Peace Circle in Zagreb. He sees parallels between the two situations: a historical consciousness which keeps memories of past injuries alive in the present, and an entanglement of religion with politics.

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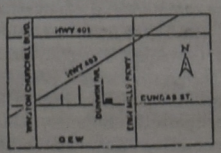

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South African Presbyterians discuss union

GENEVA, Switzerland (WARC) — The Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA) and the Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (PCSA) will discuss a union between the two churches. The PCSA originated in the early years of the 19th century, when missionaries began ministering to the soldiers of Scottish regiments stationed at Cape Town; today, roughly two-thirds of its members are white. The RPCA was born out the mission work of various Scottish churches, but became self-governing in 1923. 'In the former circumstances of our country it wasn't possible to unite,' an RPCSA member told *Update*. 'In the new South Africa, things are different.' It is hoped that a third church, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa, may also be involved.

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Willem J.B. Meyer, Q.C. *Sy L. Wassenaar, Q.C.*
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Guest column

Evangelism: the unpopular fundamental right

Paul Marshall

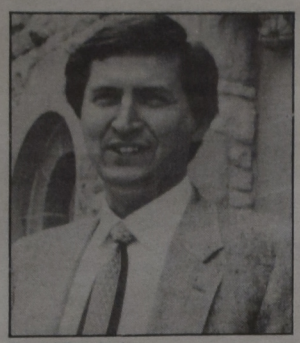
Many people, especially Westerners, want religious freedom as long as it doesn't touch their own lives. Those who have no contact have no conflict. Such a stance is often misnamed "toleration," but it is merely indifference: people pretend to be open when really they just don't care. It is when religions have an impact on outsiders that problems begin.

When you evangelize, or share your religious beliefs in an effort to try to convince others to accept them, you bring people of differing beliefs face to face, and this can arouse deep-seated tensions. Hence, evangelism has few friends and many enemies.

Evangelism's allies are those who believe in one God and, therefore, one truth. Their faith transcends cultural differences and, consequently, they want to convince others of it. The two largest monotheistic religions, Christianity and Islam, seek to persuade others. In this they often stand alone.

Many countries forbid 'conversion'

But while Christianity in modern times is for the most part tolerant of individual free will, conversion out of Islam is forbidden by *Sharia* (Islamic law). Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty; Sudan tries to compel Christian converts to return; Iran requires churches not to evangelize Muslims. Even otherwise open Muslims draw the line at such evangelism.



Paul Marshall

One Egyptian Christian leader laments that, while there might be discussion on other matters, on conversion "there is simply no point of contact. They will not budge regardless of what others think." This leaves Christianity as often the only major friend of open evangelization.

Authoritarian governments such as Singapore, Syria, China, Myanmar and others, restrict evangelism, as they restrict everything, because it creates unrest, and unrest could unsettle their power.

Regional or national religions, such as Hinduism and Shintoism (and much of Orthodox Christianity) argue that religions are tied to particular regions and peoples. Some Indians and Nepalis argue that their country is Hindu (which means the religion of the Indus Valley), hence other religions are foreign and imperialist. State assistance is denied to those who convert to non-Hindu religions.

These views are shared by some Western secularists who, though they often support other religious freedoms, see religion simply as part of local culture and therefore treat evangelists, especially missionaries, as cultural imperialists to be restricted in the name of "tolerance."

A 'scurrilous activity'

This secular Western conceit could be dismissed as bad sociology except that it seeps into human rights protection. The first international case involving evangelism was a 1993 case in which a Jehovah's Witness, one of 4,000 arrested in Greece in recent years, had been sentenced to a three-month prison term for "the act of proselytism on members of another faith." The Greek Constitution provides "that there shall be no proselytism in...religion."

On appeal the European Court of Human Rights, traditionally very sensitive on such matters, ruled against Greece. However, it distinguished between "bearing Christian witness" and "improper proselytism" and held that the Greek goal of punishing "improper proselytism" was legitimate, but that Greek law had not clarified what "improper means" are. The court itself did not define "improper proselytism" and so potentially left the door open to renewed Greek repression.

Kevin Boyle, director of the Human Rights Center at the University of Essex, describes the decision as "confused and not very brave."

Thankfully, the United Nations Human Rights Commission does better. In the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it emphasizes "the right to replace one's current religion" and says "the freedom to...adopt a religion [is]...protected unconditionally...even in time of public emergency."

However, a UN position without political and ideological support is a weak reed. Christian relief and development organizations face increasing accusations in the Third World and in Western media that their activities are a front for "proselytism." The accusations are usually untrue, but more to the point is why the accusers somehow assume that evangelism is a scurrilous act rather than a human right.

Evangelism is an internationally recognized and unnegotiable human right. No doubt it offends some people in different religions and strikes secular Westerners as uncouth, but so does the exercise of other fundamental rights, especially free speech; which is the precise reason why they need to be protected as rights.

Rights protection is most crucial in the most unpopular. Because it has few friends, the defense of evangelism needs to be an international priority, especially for those it offends.

Paul Marshall is senior member in political theory at the Institute for Christian Studies in Toronto.

Farming in Saskatchewan not hard after three years in Bangladesh

WINNIPEG, Man. (MCC) — Before Doyle Wiebe went to Bangladesh in 1991, he thought farming in Canada was hard. But after three years in Bangladesh working with local farmers he thinks life on his 1,800 acre farm near Langham, Sask., looks pretty good.

"When I go to the coffee shop this week I expect to hear all the usual complaining about how tough times are for farmers," says Wiebe, who recently returned from a three-year Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) assignment in Bangladesh. "But it's nothing compared to the risks Bangladeshi farmers face every time they put seed into the ground — they risk everything to grow a crop, and there's no insurance if it fails."

Wiebe, who co-ordinated MCC's soybean project in Bangladesh, notes farmers in that country face many risks. "If there's too much rain or not enough, you can be wiped out," he says. "There's nothing to fall back on if you lose a crop."

The goal of the soybean project was to introduce a new crop to Bangladesh that was high in protein, provided by-products such as milk and was good for the soil — soybeans replace nitrogen in the soil, preparing it for the next crop.

Wiebe points out that introducing a new crop in another country is not as easy as saying, "Here's some food — grow it." Farmers need to learn how to grow and nurture it; a market has to be created for it; and business people need to be convinced that they can sell it.

Thus far soybeans have just a toe-hold in Bangladesh, with around 2,000 metric tons (MT) produced this year. Before the crop was harvested, MCC sent 72 MT of soybeans to Bangladesh through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank to help develop markets for the larger crop. "The MCC shipment filled a critical need," says Wiebe.

Wiebe says this kind of work in other countries is different from merely sending food overseas; it increases the "food security" of local people by providing them with a viable food production system from planting seeds to selling produce.

Party kit to evangelize Super Bowl fans

Marian Van Til

LOS ANGELES — The Super Bowl, the annual season-ending showdown between the two best NFL football teams, is the most watched sports event in North America. People watch at home, at restaurants and bars, and at parties with friends. This year on Jan. 29, an increasing number of churches and individuals will host Super Bowl parties with a twist: the goal, along with watching the televised footbal game, will be evangelistic outreach.

"Last year over 4,000 [outreach] parties were held...with some 3,000 people accepting Christ as their Savior," says Tom Felten of Sports Outreach America, a consortium of 140 ministry organizations. The consortium includes groups such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, the International Bible Society and Campus Crusade for Christ.

Felten says the "highlight" of this year's outreach effort will be a 12-minute half-time video which features NFL all-star Reggie White and his wife, Sara, along with TV sportscaster Gary Bender, sharing their faith in Christ. Other Christian NFL stars playing in this year's Super Bowl will also be seen talking about their relationship with God, says Felten.

Everything you need

The video is part of a "Reggie White Super Bowl Kit" which can be ordered by individuals, groups or churches who want to throw an "outreach" party during the Super Bowl. The eight-item kit offers a "training manual" for party hosts, includes a Super Bowl T-shirt for host identification, 10 Super Bowl edition *Sports Spectrum* magazines, 24 testimony cards featuring Christian athletes, one *Path to Victory New Testament* containing a gospel presentation by former Dallas Cowboys coach Tom Landry, two "More Than Winning" evangelistic booklets, one "Straight Trax" cassette featuring the life and testimony of Reggie White. A toll-free number (1-800-BOWL-PARTY) allows both American and Canadian callers to order the kits, which cost $79.95 (shipping included).

Feature

The day I lost my identity

Berta Hosmar

Early one evening my husband, our friend Grace and I transported our bikes to a provincial park to get some exercise. Albert parked our van on the main parking lot, which was virtually empty after Labor Day, and we relished the crisp, late-summer air as we pedalled along. Some people were still camping and enjoying nature, just like us.

"Of rocks and trees and skies and seas, his hands the wonders wrought," I started to hum. The simple joys of a bike ride in peaceful surroundings can lift anyone's spirits.

About an hour later we returned to our van. My husband was the first one to spot something unusual.

All of a sudden the world did not seem such a friendly place anymore.

He froze on the spot and pointed a disgusted finger at the van's front window. "Look at that," was all he said. The window had been smashed by vandals and glass was everywhere.

"My purse!" I exclaimed. I had hid it under my seat and covered it up with a jacket so it wouldn't be visible.

The jacket was still there, and so were some Christian tapes, clearly too religious for the thief or thieves. But my purse was gone.

All of a sudden the world did not seem such a friendly place anymore. "Imagine, it's still daylight!" Grace cried indignantly as she started to pick up pieces of glass. Albert joined her as I started to bike around furiously, peeking in garbage cans in the hope of finding my purse minus wallet. No luck.

As we drove home, Grace and I took to the back seats since slivers of glass were still everywhere in the front of the van. Grace joked, practical as always, "Well, at least you don't have to put on the air conditioner!

As we drove home, I made up an inventory and discovered I was now a non-person. All my I.D. had been in my wallet. My reading lasses, car keys and my house keys were also missing.

"Oh, Albert, and that nice gold-plated pen you gave me years ago is also missing, I was so attached to it," I wailed, suddenly becoming sentimental.

Grace decided it was time for me to count my manifold blessings. "Too bad, but be glad they didn't steal him. Your husband is still sitting there," she admonished me.

After having cancelled my credit cards and telephone calling card, we decided there was little else we could do till morning, when our house door locks would have to be replaced. Two neighbors, both retired, promised to keep an eye on our house the next morning while I would go to work and to the police.

We asked our neighbors not to shoot to kill! Just take a license number should somebody decide to break in. It so happened that my brother-in-law came to visit. After thoroughly interrogating him, they let him go.

We went to sleep, but in the middle of the night I awoke with a start. "Like a thief in the night...." Those words went round and round in my head. I poked my husband awake. "Do you realize these people have our address, house keys and car keys? They can walk into our house, murder us in our beds and drive away in my own car!" I panted.

My husband opened one eye, said slowly, "Let them try!" rolled over and resumed sleeping.

The next morning things didn't look as bad. I decided our kids needed some excitement and started calling them. Our daughter was the last one I called, and by now I started to enjoy my story, giving it some extra spice. Our son-in-law answered the phone.

"I've been violated," I said somberly. "My purse and wallet are gone." Deathly silence. I could picture him thinking: "Has she been...? No, she couldn't have...; too old." Aloud he said, practically, "Did you cancel your credit cards?" So much for sympathy!

I left for my volunteer job at a Christian drop-in centre which serves the homeless and people who have problems with alcohol- or drug abuse or who need a listening ear. I told them of my predicament. They were all very helpful. "Go to the pawnshop," they advised me. "Your purse might be there!" I asked them where exactly the police station was. They all knew!

"I know of a lady whose wallet had been stolen," said one. "Somebody else impersonated her. All of a sudden she had a police record and it took her years to straighten out her life." I didn't exactly need to hear *that*.

At the police station, the officer looked totally bored. "Fill out this form," he said. When I demurely informed him I couldn't read the questions since my glasses had also been stolen, he sighed deeply. After helping me, he gave me a sheet of paper and asked me to write in my own words what exactly had happened and what was missing. "Or can't you write either?" he asked rather sarcastically. I decided he was having a bad day and needed some cheering up.

Writing is my specialty and I made my report as interesting as possible, beginning with the words: "Little did we know when we got on our bikes..., and ending with the dramatic sentence: "I am now a person without proof that I exist. That is a strange feeling. I am driving without a license, have no credit card, no wallet, no OHIP card or social insurance number. I am a nobody."

I handed him my essay and watched his face carefully. Slowly he started to smile, and when he was finished, he became very helpful. I felt smug.

After coming home and paying the locksmith with my husband's credit card, I decided I needed some money. Suddenly I discovered that I did not even have a dime to put in the parking meter if I were to go to the bank. Nowhere in my other purses could I find any change, except for a few pennies.

If you don't own, you beg. I went to my neighbor and asked him if I could please have a dime. He gave me a quarter and told me I didn't need to repay him!

My optometrist had very recently passed away and the office was closed, so I needed a new eye examination. I was lucky to get an appointment that same day. "What's your OHIP number?" the doctor asked me. I had to confess I didn't know. That card was also missing. The doctor had a cheerful personality and said "Look at it this way. There's something nobody can ever take away from you. Not now, not ever, it belongs to you always. *"He must be a Christian, and he must mean that nobody can take away the love of God, from me,"* I thought, pleasantly surprised. "What is it that nobody can take away from me?" I asked.

"Your birthday," he said happily. "Now, let's look at these letters and see if you can read these little buggers."

The person at the OHIP office was less helpful. I was told that I needed two pieces of I.D. when applying for a new card. "I don't have them," I argued. "I've lost them all. How can I prove to you that I'm really me, and am not giving you a false name? I must be on a computer somewhere."

Eventually that problem was also solved.

A week later my new wallet was slowly filling up with little plastic cards. I now carry a purse with a strap that I wear over my left shoulder, and I hang on to my purse tenaciously. If they want to steal it, they'll have to take my head with it.

I'm still wondering if my miniature photo album with the numerous pictures of our four grandchildren is resting somewhere in a garbage bin, or under some shrubs in a provincial park on Lake Ontario.

Berta Hosmar is a freelance writer who lives in Whitby, Ont.

Feature

Lessons learned on the Moscow metro

My five-week stay in Russia (2)

Aren Geisterfer

After about 20 minutes we drove into Moscow, the heart of Mother Russia. I was deeply impressed as we drove into the city: all these high buildings with those strange yet familiar letters, reminding me about the sinister and secretive power of the former Soviet Union. Yet all the people in the streets and on the sidewalks were just like myself, ordinary people with their personal needs and their own troubles.

Aren and Timah enjoy some refreshments at the Old Market.

There was much color in the dresses of the women, while the men were dressed more the typical drab grey to black. I saw only a few children at first, and many, many dirty huge-looking high-rises.

I could hardly imagine that once this was the famous capital of the much feared Soviet Empire, which was then a superpower with lots of nuclear warheads pointing at us in North America.

Now on these wide avenues were standing hundreds of flimsy-looking kiosks. The traffic was not heavy, but the pollution almost choked me; my asthma started to bother me.

People were lining up for the buses in front of a bakery, and many were trying to buy other items. After another 25 to 30 minutes we finally arrived in the district of "middle class" Russians where my daughter and her husband had their apartment. It was in a district with about two dozen other high-rises, near the metro station of Kalomenskyja.

I was looking for houses, but Timah (my daughter) told me that there were none. *Everybody* lives in a highrise. What struck me was that each highrise was surrounded by lots of beautiful trees and clean roads. In between these huge white and greyish buildings was an elementary school with a kindergarten, and further down the road, a high school. At the kindergarten I met the first children on this sunny mid-day. They were playing in the open air, all wearing only brief shorts. There was something tranquil about this scene of children playing under their teacher's supervision in the open.

When we entered Timah's building there was nobody to welcome us, except for some inquisitive stares from tenants who happened to come by. It was a small entrance for such a big highrise. We almost had to split up to get into the elevator to the eighth floor. It could hardly hold three people with some luggage.

When we arrived in their apartment Timah showed me the place. They had one room, which was about four by five metres, and a narrow kitchen, which was less than two and a quarter metres wide and five long, with a balcony less than two metres wide.

Later I discovered that the best thing they had was a bathroom with hot and cold water, for quite a few others in Moscow did not have this luxury. I had to sleep in the same room as the young couple. I found out later that many a Russian couple with two, or three children share the same bedroom space, without any of the comforts we in the West have. No extra rooms, not even a hallway.

Generous hosts

Most of the time I had the privilege of an interpreter, who spoke both Russian and English fluently, while I tried to converse in English. Mostly I listened to what Russians were saying and to what they were asking about the West. Out of these conversations I started to ask questions about their views and about Russian life. Once we had established some contact with our Russian hosts, they became very warm and hospitable to us. In spite of the food shortage, we were almost always invited to eat something with them — lunch, or occasionally supper. They appreciated our low-key approach.

The Russians are very good hosts, warm and willing to give the shirt off their backs. However, the present reality dictates that there is much poverty among many of Russia's ordinary citizens.

Often after each day of travelling, visiting and sharing, as the evening came to a close, I was saddened, for there is much pain in Russia. It is a country which is in the midst of coming to grips with its demonic past. And many of us who come from the West have no idea of this pain, this ongoing struggle that actually spanned the last three or four decades. Very few Russians dare to deal with the treachery of the Soviet past, in which almost every Russian citizen participated.

Of course, there were many good things during the Soviet regime, some Leninists will try to tell you, such as full employment and a measure of sufficient food and good health services; but the long years of wholesale, public political manipulation has left the people in shock. How this could have happened to Russia, which has a proud history and heart, is very difficult to grasp.

The underground world of the metro

As we travelled regularly by public transportation, especially making frequent use of the metro which runs very efficiently throughout Moscow, I began to meet Russians in their own setting. Many riding the metro try to read something in the papers they hold, or a book they carry. Others stare aimlessly, silently suffering from the monotonous and drab Russian lifestyle. Food and clothing are hard to get, while the ruble is losing value every day. At my arrival I could exchange 1,890 rubles for one U.S. dollar, when I left I could get 2,280 rubles.

Every one-and-a-half to two minutes trains arrive at and leave from stations. The trains themselves are clean and convenient, and the huge underground stations are very easy to get to. They are all walled-in with granite and marble, and in most of the central stations one can admire the many frescoes, sculptures and other forms of art.

Of course, all of this was dedicated to the "famous" Socialist Revolution. A careful study of these works of art reveals much of the Soviet era's tasteless pre-occupation with the Revolution itself. Almost every work depicts three or more comrades: an older man, a younger soldier and a woman, all bearing arms. Wherever a woman is depicted, she is much like her male counterpart. Whether she is portrayed in a uniform, or playing with children, or working in a state enterprise of some kind, she is always heavy and flat-breasted, with very few feminine traits. Often she is wearing the same garb as her male partner. Thus the female character of the Russian woman is overshadowed by the male chauvinism of her "brother comrade." In the Soviet Union one had to be "manly," perhaps, making him or her a better soldier. This art work makes one wonder about the claim that during the Soviet years women were equal to men.

The past not forgotten

During one of my frequent trips on the metro, I attempted to photograph some of the huge murals and sculptures. Suddenly a woman appeared behind me, shouting aggressively at me while pointing at the huge frescoes: "These are the great achievements of the Soviet culture!" I tried to nod kindly, but she kept on yelling at me: "Amerikanski, go home!"

My dear daughter attempted to assure her that I was quite impressed with Russia's culture, but Timah's remark was not appreciated. To some citizens, a reference to Russia doesn't have the same triumphant quality as one to the Soviet Union. One has to be aware of that. Such sudden outbursts of anger by some of the radical Soviets are not rare, but one must ignore them — Stalin, Beria and many other luminaries of the Soviet Union are safely buried behind Lenin's tomb.

Coming back to the Moscow underground metro: the reality is that the public transportation network in Moscow is quite efficient. The stations are also very clean, except when the drunks throw up, which is not rare.

AREN GEISTERFER PHOTOS

One of the platforms inside Moscow's underground Metro.

The fare is very low (about 120 R) and one can make use of every public form of transportation with one ticket. I have been in Europe, Japan and here in Canada and the U.S., but no country can beat the efficient, smooth-running Moscow metro. And it has a very impressive safety record.

Look for part 3 of this four-part series next week.

Aren Geisterfer is the Christian Reformed chaplain at McMaster University, Hamilton, Ont.

Strategies for dynamic praying

David Trembley

One of the saddest things in my life as a pastor is seeing how anemic many of my congregants' prayer lives are. Occasionally I discover ardent, excited pray-ers, of course, but more often families in which even table grace has been let go. Oh, perhaps when the children are little, one of them is taught to say something innocuous like "Come, Lord Jesus, be our guest..." or "Lord bless this meat that we shall eat...."

Then at bedtime — again, if there are little children in the home — there is often "Now I lay me down to sleep..." and "God bless Mama, Papa and Uncle John."

The important thing is for each pray-er to find words which are right for him or her.

Cries of desperation and children's rote prayers are what I witness the most in the pastoring I do. Let's let the desperation go for the moment, but as my own prayer life has deepened, I am more and more convinced that rote prayers are appropriate not even for children.

What is prayer? Conversation with God? Not quite. "Communion" is a better word. Prayer simply means being aware of the presence of God. For Protestant Christians, however, that word "conversation" is very important because when we think about the relationship between God and persons, we tend to think about words. "Word," after all, is *Logos*, the Apostle John's favorite name for who God is.

There are a great many ways to develop and deepen the connection between words and prayer. One time-tested way is to base our prayers on the words of faith which have endured. Passages of Scripture, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed — these are the sorts of words I mean. Both as preparation for prayer and structure of prayer such words can be very powerful.

Too self-focused

The problem with most anemic pray-ers, however, does not have much to do with prayer itself; rather, the problem is that the prayers are too focused upon themselves and their own inadequacies and not nearly enough focused upon God. Sometimes a very simple strategy will begin to move matters in a righteous direction.

Here's just such a strategy. Take a 10-minute segment of your morning prayer time and shape it like this. First, slow your breathing down until it is slow and regular. That will help you be focused. Then, on each intake of breath, say silently or aloud, "Thank You, God...." As soon as the exhalation begins, add "for..." and then whatever specific person, situation, or object for whom or which you are grateful. Then take three complete breaths in silence and repeat the process until the 10 minutes is consumed.

For some folks, an even simpler thing is needed in order to enter the path of more effective prayer. Chanting is one of those simpler things. Our Orthodox and Roman Catholic sisters and brothers have known about the power of chanting for a long time. We Protestants are coming late to the awareness.

Let me speak personally now from my own recently increasing depth of prayer. Praying and chanting go together very well indeed. I am even coming to believe that there is an appropriate distinctive Protestant form of chanting.

Each believer, I think, should choose his or her own words. When I first added chanting to my prayers, I used the phrase "Lord God, Almighty." The phrase wasn't quite right for me, but it was the best I could do at first. I found that if I chanted those words — even if I did so silently — when I started to lose my focus in prayer, the chant would bring me back to awareness of the presence of God.

"Nevertheless Christ Jesus" is the phrase I am using now. I have all sorts of personal and theological reasons for those words, but I do not believe that any of those reasons matter very much to others. The important thing is for each pray-er to find words which are right for him or her. Here's a list of some possibilities:

* Lord, have mercy
* Creator God
* Come, Holy Comforter; come
* Rock of salvation
* Eternal God
* Praise you, Lord Jesus

Keep it short, make sure the words are personally meaningful, and encourage an attitude of experimentation. Also experiment with the melody of the chant. Try various arrangements of pitch and rhythm, and you will sooner or later discover a pattern which is right for you.

Don't give up too soon. Once you've found words, a melody, and a rhythm, give the pattern a chance. Resolve for some significant period of time to use that chant — either silently or aloud — at the beginning of prayer, at the end, and whenever attention has strayed from awareness of the presence of God.

Body language

Words are by no means the only way of deepening our experiences of prayer. Another effective focus is upon the posture of our bodies. If we reflect, we shall discover that our bodies are often — perhaps always — "saying something." What else does the expression "body language" mean?

So it is when we pray. Praise and thanksgiving suggest an upright posture with the head turned up also perhaps and the arms and hands lifted into the air. Humility suggests kneeling or lying prostate on the floor. Prayers for strengthening and meditative prayers are perhaps best done by means of sitting back in a recliner. Penitence and devotion to Christ could well be expressed by adopting a habit of the early Church and standing with arms outstretched as a reminder of Christ on the cross.

Once we begin experimenting with prayer, some pretty interesting things start to happen. Instead of being a dull time of duty or mere habit, prayer becomes an event which is anticipated with joy and a sense of discovery.

Don't just talk about it

Once that adventure begins, there's no reason to restrict it simply to individuals. Families, small groups, and even whole congregations can work on deepening their prayer lives together. Run a few simple prayer experiments in the congregation, for example, and then invite those whose prayer life deepens to continue the adventure in small groups.

With suggestions like these, the treasure chest of prayer has at last been opened, but it is only open a tiny crack. For instance, what is the meaning of the scriptural admonition "to pray without ceasing" or the Latin motto, *Laborare est orare* (to work is to pray)?

These are deep questions and well worth exploring. They are questions, however, much beyond answering for those who are still struggling with making prayer meaningful.

It is therefore appropriate to close with a caution. There is a great temptation to talk about praying rather than to actually pray. It is much less scary to try to understand prayer rather than to do prayer. So run an experiment, even of the simplest kind, and then let the reflection come. Theories of prayer which do not involve changing behavior are not likely to amount to much, but reflection which is born from actual experiences of prayer will probably lead to even more powerful praying.

David Trembley is co-pastor with his wife of Broken Walls Christian Community in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

A group experiment in prayer

1. Teach the little prayer-song, "Spirit of the Living God."
   Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
   Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
   Mold me, make me, fill me, use me.
   Spirit of the Living God, fall afresh on me.
2. After singing the song until everyone knows it, recite the words to the group as they stand with their eyes closed listening. Pause often and ask them to think of what the words mean to them and to that meaning in their bodies.
3. Propose a common way to pray the song with the pray-ers' bodies. Instructions might look like this:

A. At the phrase "Spirit of the Living God," stand tall with eyes closed, and reach hands high into the air, straining to reach God's Spirit.

B. At the phrase "fall afresh on me," let hands fall slowly to the side or "bring the gathered Spirit into one's center with one's hands."

C. "Mold me" can be a time to let the body go slack or twisted into a posture of humility.

D. "Make me" can signal the resumption of standing tall before God.

E. "Fill me" can signal the replication of the hands straining upward.

F. "Use me" can be a sign to stretch out one's arms as if on a cross in imitation of the Christ.

G. At the end of the singing, the group should stand in silence for a while and just listen and feel.

H. It is often effective to follow the time of silence with another slow, careful, and prayerful singing of the song.

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Letter

What constitutes 'properly getting married'?

Peter and Marja Slofstra's column "More than one way to be married" (CC, Sept. 2, 1994) has been sitting in my little basket of stuff to do something with or about someday, but now the day has arrived. The reason I put the column aside was that I felt P&M had not handled the issue very well and had not been particularly helpful to their correspondent. So, here are my thoughts on the matter. You may use them as you see fit.

The fundamental problem is that, while the Bible says a good deal about "being married" starting with the Ten Commandments, it says virtually nothing about "getting married," leaving, among other things, the question whether "getting married" is a religious or a civil action unanswered. Puzzling, too, is the fact that with all the Christian lifestyle advice, guidance and direction provided by the apostles, they say virtually nothing about the act of getting married. Why don't they? And just how was it done in those days?

Public confession of sexual sin

At any rate, the church had to deal with this and did so — probably guided more by the mores of the day than the divine direction. I remember well what this sort of thing led to, e.g., in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN). In the '30s (my teen years) that church required public confession (that is, in front of the congregation) of having sinned against the seventh commandment, this sin evidenced by pregnancy resulting from premarital intercourse.

At one such occasion we asked the minister in catechism class about the seeming contradiction: How can you sin against the seventh commandment if you're not married yet? The poor man was greatly embarrassed and his attempt at explaining incomprehensible — at least to us. In the end he evoked the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We tied ourselves in knots and this in those days and we still tend to do so.

Through the ages and around the world getting married always has involved a vast array of practices, ceremonies, rituals and traditions. The background to this, I would think, was the community's recognition of the family as its principal building block and the importance of starting a new family with all the attention and protection it could muster. Studies of this will likely require an anthropological approach or, at least, more so than a theological one.

Marriage involves four elements

Getting married, I think, always has involved four elements: a covenant, an exchange of vows, public witnessing and consummation of the union. The relative importance of one element over another is forever changing over time and as between cultures — sometimes considerably so. But they do exist. Public witnessing has gained major prominence over the last two centuries or so, probably because of the introduction of the civil wedding before a magistrate in France's *Code Civil* enacted by Napoleon, thus giving the covenant a basis in law.

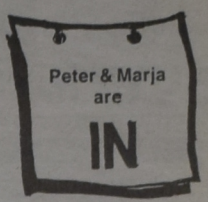
In the end, given these elements, especially for Christians the question is not so much what is proper as how do we want to do it. And for this we can find guidance in the Bible.

In Mark 10 some Pharisees try to trap Jesus on the issue of divorce. In his response Jesus stresses the "becoming one" of a man and a woman and concludes with the statement, "Man must not separate, then, what God has joined together." Thus, if one accepts that God has willed the union, shouldn't one want the union to be witnessed in his presence by his people and while seeking his blessing?

Coming back to the questioner, she or he really provided an answer to an unstated question — but a question asked over and over again, namely: "In the sight of God and for the purpose of the seventh commandment, what constitutes properly getting married?" P&M's answer to the questioner could have been something like: If this is how you plan to start you will not be living in sin, but neither will you have started as well as you could.

I hope you find this helpful.

John Meyer
Nepean, Ont.



Are short-term missions projects worth supporting?

Dear P & M:

We are grandparents and retired. Of late we have received many requests from grandchildren, nieces and nephews for contributions to their "mission projects." The letters are mostly written by professionals. All the grandchildren have to do is fill in "Dear Opa and Oma." Their destination is either Nigeria, Germany, Switzerland or Brazil.

What can we expect if they go for three weeks or three months to a country where the language is other than English? We feel we will not spend our money wisely if we support these projects, and so we have not responded to these requests lately.

The latest one was "to work among the street kids in Brazil." We think it's a worthwhile project for someone who is fluent in Spanish and is trained to deal with the problems these children encounter, but not for someone who speaks only English and has received a three-week course (even a longer course will not do much good).

It's not pleasant for grandparents to say No; however, we did. The problem is that these projects are endorsed and advertised in church bulletins and other church papers. What do you think about it?

I also have to add that one of our children went for a SWIM (Summer Workshop In Missions) some years ago and the group was asked to paint a basement. Luckily they said, "We did not come here to paint." Fortunately SWIM projects don't cost too much, but these international projects run in the thousands of dollars. We would rather give money to a group of people building a church or school in the Dominican Republic.

Your answer is very important to us. We have discussed the matter with others, too. Saying, "It's not doing any harm, or it's a good experience" is not an answer.

Dear Short Term Missions

Your questions about these mission projects are valid. The language barrier, the limited impact, and the costs to the participants make all of us wonder whether these projects are worth supporting.

Despite these concerns, we think that a young person who decides to spend his or her time doing something for the Lord and for others should always be supported. Consider what else they could be doing. Instead of doing nothing or working only for themselves, such teens or young adults are willing to give up the comforts of home, daily contact with their friends, and the money they could be earning.

It may be the case that some of their motivation is a desire for adventure and travel in foreign places. But most young people who consider short-term missions are very sincere in their desire to witness to Christ. That kind of spark needs to be fanned into flame, not snuffed out.

For the individual who goes such projects are short-term. But we should not forget that the stability and the long-term impact comes from the sponsoring agency.

We especially don't want to underestimate the long-term effect on the persons who go. They are all profoundly affected by their volunteer experiences. They have a new awareness of the needs that exist in the world. They experience the affluence of our society differently. They are more open about witnessing to their faith. They have a healthier attitude about serving and giving of their time and money. In short, they are more mature spiritually because they have put their faith on the line.

Of course you have the freedom to say Yes or No to any request which comes to you. Your budget has its limitations, too. Yet it means so much to a grandchild to have Opa and Oma's support for doing something that honors the Lord. Look at it as a wonderful way to invest 20, 50 or a hundred dollars. The younger generation can only stand to benefit when the older generation applauds its desire to work for the Lord.

Write to: P & M
c/o Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Road
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1

Peter and Marja Slofstra are a pastor and wife team living in St. Catharines, Ont. They are assisted by an advisory panel consisting of Herman de Jong, Bill Lidkea, Tom Zeyl, Marian Van Til and Bert Witvoet.

IS THAT SO?

(NC)—Did you know that there are more Francophones in Canada than in Belgium and Switzerland put together?

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Certified General Accountant
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St. Catharines, Ontario
L2N 6T4
BUS: (905) 646-4515 RES: (905) 935-3337

Make use of our Business Directory every second week of the month!

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Classifieds

Classified Rates

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Anniversaries $45.00
2-column anniversaries . $90.00
Obituaries $45.00
Notes of thanks $35.00
Birthdays $40.00

All other one-column classified advertisements: $13.50 per column inch. NOTE: Minimum fee is $25.00. Letter under file number $35.00 extra. Photos: $25.00 additional charge.

Note: All rates shown above are GST inclusive

ATTENTION!

a) *Christian Courier* reserves the right to print classifieds using our usual format.,

b) A sheet with information about an obituary sent by funeral homes is *not* acceptable since it leads to errors and confusion.

c) Photographs sent by fax *are not* acceptable. If you wish a photo included, send us the original.

d) *Christian Courier* will not be responsible for any errors due to handwritten or phoned-in advertisements.

e) The rate shown above for classifieds covers any length up to six column inches. *Christian Courier* reserves the right to charge for additional column inches at the rate of $13.50 per column inch (GST incl.).

NEWLYWEDS & NEW PARENTS

We offer a one-year subscription for only $20.00 (GST incl.) to the couples whose wedding is announced in the *Christian Courier* and to the parents of the child whose birth announcement appears in our paper. To facilitate matters, we encourage those who request the wedding or birth announcement to enclose $20.00 and the couple's correct address.

Christian Courier
4-261 Martindale Rd.
St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311
Fax: (905) 682-8313

ATTENTION!

When you fax your display or classified ads to us, please type them and check spelling BEFORE you transmit the text. Thank you!

Birthdays

VAN DER LAAN-BEEKHUIS:

"The Lord will watch over your coming and going, both now and forever more" (Ps. 121:8).

With joy, and thankful to God for her love, her steadfast faith, her courage and encouragement, we celebrate the 90th birthday of our dear mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

DINA VAN DER LAAN-BEEKHUIS

on Jan. 10, 1995.

Her children:
Stiny & Herman de Jong
Harry & Renate van der Laan
Henk & Anne van der Laan
Co & Alice van der Laan
Rika van der Laan
Diane van der Laan-Feunekes
19 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

Address: Holland Christian Homes, F.M. 127, 7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Anniversaries

Ommen, the Neth. Minesing, Ont.
1945 January 17 1995

It is with great joy and thankfulness to God that we celebrate the 50th anniversary of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents

LEENDERT and MARGJE NOORDEGRAAF
(nee WINTERS)

We thank the Lord for the many years He has given them. Congratulations Mom and Dad, Gramma and Grampa for the love and support you have given us over the years and may God continue to bless and keep you both.

Maria & Cory Cornelisse — Stayner
Wilhelmina & George Harris — Barrie
Lena & Wayne Kloosterman — Thornton
Klaas & Margje Noordegraaf — Minesing
Mary & Casey Veenstra — Phelpston
Lenord & Gerry Noordegraaf — Minesing
Elizabeth & fiance Robert McNabb — Collingwood
Harry & Marlene Noordegraaf — Stayner
Lucille & Mike Barrett — Phelpston
Robert & Louise Noordegraaf — Stayner
38 grandchildren and 11 great-grandchildren.

Open house on Jan. 21, 1995, from 2:30 - 5:00 p.m., at Sunnidale Corners Community Hall (Hwy 26 E. of Stayner).

Best wishes only.

Home address: R.R. #1, Minesing, ON L0L 1Y0

Anniversaries

1940 1995

WIERD and JANTJE HOOGSTEEN

"I will lift up my eyes to the hills. From whence does my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

With thankfulness to the Lord we hope to celebrate with our parents their 55th anniversary on the 18th of this month.

T. & J. Hoogsteen
M. & W. VanLingen
W. & A. Hoogsteen
F. & E. VanLingen
J. & C. Hooghiem
C. & B. Dieleman
S. & M. Hoogsteen
B. & T. Nixon
with grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Anniversaries

1955 1995

Psalm 32:8b

We, the children and grandchildren of

BERT and FRANCIS SNIPPE

thank the Lord for His love and faithfulness shown to our parents and grandparents through their 40 years of marriage.

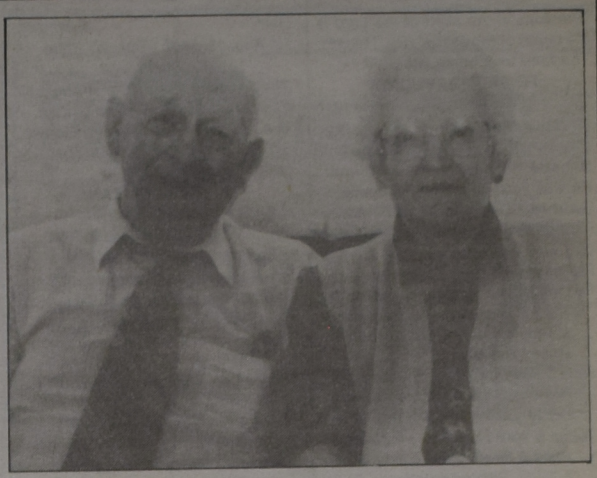
Lydia & Peter Bruining — Dunnville, Ont.
Rachel, Joshua, Rheanna, Katelyn
Jack & Debbie Snippe — Smithville, Ont.
Robert, Jonathan, Kimberly, Mark, Nathan
Judy & Terry Bergsma — Simcoe, Ont.
Jessica, Julia
Leonard & Bertha Lynn Snippe — Wellandport, Ont.
Elisha, Bradley, Justin, Mitchell
Anthony & Janet Snippe — Dunnville, Ont.
Matthew, Rebecca, Sarah, Ryan
Fran & Fred Vanderheide — Dunnville, Ont.
Robert, Victoria, Jordan, Andrea

Open house Saturday, Jan. 21, 1995, from 2 - 4 p.m. at Wellandport Chr. School, Wellandport, Ont.

Personal

A senior gentleman, CRC background, in the Woodstock area requires a **full-time housekeeper/companion** with a valid Ontario drivers' licence. Some knowledge of the Dutch language would be an asset. Remuneration negotiable. Please forward inquiries and letters of interest to: **c/o Mrs. J. Van Laren, R.R. #1, Sebringville, ON N0K 1X0**

Anniversaries



Congratulations to Wierd and Jantje Hoogsteen on the occasion of their 55th wedding anniversary!

Obituaries

Psalm 90

It pleased the Lord to take home our husband, dad and grampa

TJIBBE (BILL) BYLSMA

in his 77th year, on Monday, Dec. 19, 1994, after struggling with cancer for almost a year.

Along with his wife, Sjoukje (DeGraaf), he will be remembered by his children and grandchildren,

Diana Kingma (Bert) — Stoney Creek
Jeremy, Christopher, Jennifer
Teresa Bylsma — London
Annette Bylsma — London
Rick Bylsma (Jacqueline) — Strathroy
Jason
Alice Salomons (Charly) — Strathroy
Kevin, Brian, Scott, Dennis

Also survived by his siblings Tjerk (Jack) of Woodstock, Ont., Tjeerd, Klaas and Aaltje of the Netherlands. Predeceased by his son Mike Bylsma, September 1980.

On Dec. 19, 1994, the Lord took unto Himself our brother-in-law

TJIBBE (BILL) BYLSMA

husband of our sister Sjoukje.

May the Lord strengthen and comfort you and your family as you adjust to the calling home of your dear husband and father.

From your brothers, sisters-in-law, nieces and nephews:

Louw & Elly DeGraaf — Wommels, the Neth.
Jouke & Anna DeGraaf — Stoney Creek, Ont.
Karen & the late Geale DeGraaf — Beamsville, Ont.
Corrie & late Wiebe DeGraaf — Woodstock, Ont.
John & Annie Streukter & the late Tolly DeGraaf — Woodstock, Ont.

and all their children. Also, predeceased by Anne and Anna Laanstra, formerly of Strathroy, Ont.

Obituaries

On Dec. 24, 1994, God called home our dear mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and great-great-grandmother

HENDRIKJE FLUIT
(nee VANDENBERG)

at Shalom Manor in Grimsby, Ont., in her 95th year.

Predeceased by her husband of 67 years, Klaas Fluit (July 20, 1993).

Dear mother of:
Hilda & Bert Drost — Drayton
Klaas & Fanny Fluit — Fenwick
Griet DeRoo — Hamilton
Henk & Joan Fluit — Caledonia
Frederika & Phil Muys — Ancaster

Loving Oma of 29 grandchildren, many great-grandchildren and great-great-grandchildren.

She will be sadly missed by her sister-in-law Femmigje Linde of the Netherlands.

Beloved aunt of Dien and Henk Dekker of Mount Hope and many nieces and nephews in the Netherlands.

She was predeceased by her son-in-law George DeRoo (1967) and great-granddaughter Veronica Peaire (1994).

The funeral service was held on Dec. 28, 1994, at Grimsby Chr. Ref. Church, Grimsby, Ont., with Rev. DeBruyne officiating.

Psalm 84.

Miscellaneous

Attention: CRC Pastors

Would you like to preach in Nova Scotia? If you're travelling/vacationing in Eastern Canada, please consider doing the **Chr. Ref. Church in Kentville, N.S.,** a big favor!

Please contact **Gerrit Tenyenhuis** at **(902) 538-9533.**

Classifieds

Obituaries

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints" (Ps. 116:15).
The Lord took home His child

RIMMER (RAYMOND) KINGMA

on Thursday evening, Dec. 22, 1994, in Strathroy Middlesex General Hospital, in his 80th year. He was surrounded by his family.
Beloved husband of Antje (Greidanus) and dear Dad and Pake of:
Pietje (with Jesus - 1940)
Patsy & Hugh Pranger — Beechwood
Anne & Wes, Agnus & Rob, Henry & Tineke, Elaine & Calvin, Bonnie, Robert & Evelyn
Jerry & MaryAnn Kingma — Strathroy
Raymond, Garett, Karen & Mark, Henry, Linda
Wilma & Wick Hamstra — Strathroy
Anita & Scott, Jane & Pete, Peter & Betty, Richard & Jana
Gretchen & Gary VanArragon — Guelph
William & Becky, Angela & Gord, Raymond, Brad, Harmina, Melanie
Ruth & Hank Haan — Strathroy
Annette, Les, Ryan, Jerry
Corrie & John Beintema — Wyoming
Anna, Ida, Renee, Renold, John-Curtis
The funeral service was held on Tuesday morning, Dec. 27, 1994, in the Westmount Chr. Ref. Church, Strathroy, Ont., with Rev. A. VandenEnde and Rev. J. Vande-Hoef officiating.
Correspondence address: Mrs. A. Kingma, 181 Ellor St., Strathroy, ON N7G 2L2

's Gravenzande Surrey
Z.H., the Neth. B.C.
Dec. 31, 1911 - Dec. 25, 1994

"Gladness and joy will overtake them and sorrow and sighing will flee away" (Is. 35:10).
On Dec. 25, 1994, the Lord called home our beloved mother, grand- and great-grandmother

FRANCINA MARIA VAN DOP (nee NIEUWENHUIZEN)

in her 83rd year.
Predeceased by her husband Maarten Willem van Dop on Feb. 22, 1992.
Beloved mother of:
Gerda & Klaas Bosma
Casey & Corry van Dop
Adrian & Margaret van Dop
Martin & Carol van Dop
Jane & John Bouma
Francine & Rein Hoekstra
John & Theresa van Dop
and 23 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.
Funeral service was held on Dec. 30, 1994, at Richmond Chr. Ref. Church, Richmond, B.C., Pastor Albert Westerhuis officiating.
Correspondence address: Gerda Bosma, 5060 Francis Rd., Richmond, BC V7C 1K3

Obituaries

Delft Brampton
Aug. 15, 1905 - Dec. 23, 1994
Psalm 8

They go from strength to strength till each appears before God in Zion.

The Lord took home our mother, grandmother and great-grandmother

ADRIANA (SJAAN) VANDER KOOIJ (nee DE RUITER)

in her 90th year.
Rita Bydevaate — Georgetown, Ont.
Harry & Klaaske Vander Kooij — Holland Marsh, Ont.
Sara & John Veenstra — Smithers, B.C.
Peter & Leni Vander Kooij — Bradford, Ont.
Corrie & Harry Langendoen — Elmira, Ont.
Audrey & Harry Kruisselbrink — Smithers, B.C.
Margaret & Piet Mostert — Ariss, Ont.
John Vander Kooij & Caroline Caddie — Bradford, Ont.
Chris Vander Kooij & Pam Hoey — Aurora, Ont.
29 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.
Survived by one brother Chris de Ruiter of Delft, the Neth., and one sister Margaret Winter of Brampton, Ont.
Predeceased by her beloved Arie Vander Kooij in 1983, son-in-law Chris Bydevaate in 1990 and grandsons Mark Vander Kooij in 1970 and Leonard Bydevaate in 1991.
Correspondence address: 190 Church St. W., Elmira, ON N3B 1N4

Feb. 17, 1925 - Dec. 18, 1994
Woodstock, Ont.

"But I trust in you, O Lord; I say, 'You are my God.' My times are in your hands" (Ps. 31:14,15a).
At the age of 69, our dearly loved Husband, Father, and Opa

HENRY SCHEPERS

was taken into glory to be with his God and King.
Sadly missed by his wife, Lucille Schepers.
Father and Opa of:
Lucille & Andy Koopman — Embro
Mark, Mike, Daniel, David, Joshua
Henry Schepers & Maria — Embro
Nancy & Peter VanderVecht — Embro
Nikki, Amanda, Stephanie, Nathan, Paul
Jenny & Ben Linker — Strathroy
Megan, Sarah
Pat & Bruce Van Hell — Wellandport
Chelsey, Cameron
Peter Schepers — Woodstock
Correspondence address: 765 Pavey St., Woodstock, ON N4S 2L7

Obituaries

"Her pilgrim journey ended at heaven's gate."

GRIETJE VAN HARTEN (nee DE GROOT)

Dec. 22, 1994, in her 94th year.
Beloved wife of the late Leendert van Harten (1979).
Loved mother of:
Henk & Aukje Van Harten — Brantford, Ont.
Ralph & Helen Van Harten — Sunderland, Ont.
Ann & John Glas — Oakville, Ont.
Nelly & Krien Vos — Newmarket, Ont.
John & Juul Bakker — Holland Landing, Ont.
Henny van Harten — Gabriola Is., B.C.
Margo & John Vanderlaan — Mississauga, Ont.
Martha & Joerg Gorgas — Brooklin, Ont.
Menno & Jackie Van Harten — Guelph, Ont.
Greta & Hans Bontkes — Richmond, B.C.
Len & Lorraine Van Harten — Campbellville, Ont.
Grandmother of 38 and great-grandmother of 62 children. Survived by one brother in Brampton, Ont. Predeceased by one daughter and three grandchildren.
Funeral service was held at the First Chr. Ref. Church in Brantford, Ont., Dec. 27, 1994, officiated by Rev. Peter Van Egmond.
Correspondence address: Mr. Henk Van Harten, 38 Linden Avenue, Brantford, ON N3S 7E5

Hemelum Clearbrook
1939 - 1994

On Dec. 24, 1994, the Lord called home,

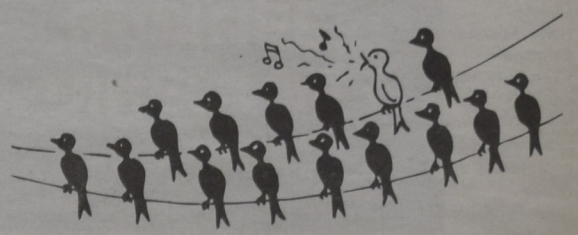
MARGARET (GRIETJE) VAN HARMELEN (nee VAN DER VEEN)

Predeceased by her husband Johannes, Dec. 13, 1991.
Dear Mother of:
Martha & Bill te Hennepe — Deroche, B.C.
Sandy & Dennis Booth — Everson, Wash.
Simon & Mary Beldman — Dorchester, Ont.
Martin & Margaret Bootsma — Salmon Arm, B.C.
Martin & Joanne Ravensbergen — Abbotsford, B.C.
Grandmother of 18 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.
We are comforted by Romans 8:28A: "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him."

Look for
Peter and Marja
on page 13...

Miscellaneous

IS THAT SO?



(NC)—In Nova Scotia one out of 15 federal public service employees needs to know both English and French, one out of 70 in Newfoundland.

Miscellaneous

CHRISTIAN COURIER needs TELEMARKETERS

As part of our Spring '94 promotion campaign, **Christian Courier** conducted a pilot telemarketing project in St. Catharines, Ont. Four loyal CC supporters spent a few evenings on the phone and the result was **56 new subscribers!**

We need **local volunteers** all over Canada to conduct similar campaigns. It's too expensive to engage in telemarketing from St. Catharines. Key is: those who do the phoning must **know** the people in their community and must have a **warm heart** for CC! You can't beat the personal touch.

Don't let telemarketing scare you... it's a matter of simply phoning certain people between the hours of 5 and 7 p.m., for, say **two** or **three** evenings. We will supply you with a kit containing a) a computer printout of the subscribers in your area, and b) some simple instructions.

Christian Courier needs help! We simply need to expand our subscriber base. Please write, phone or fax **me or Bert Witvoet.** Thank you very much!

Stan de Jong
Business Manager

4-261 Martindale Road, St.Catharines, ON L2W 1A1
Phone: (905) 682-8311 Fax: (905) 682-8313

Classifieds

Personal	Job Opportunities	For Sale	Job Opportunities	Job Opportunities

World War II

Who can supply a St. Catharines, Ont., resident with a complete set of Dr. L. de Jong's **Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog**? Indicate price. Please reply to **File #2624, c/o Christian Courier, 4-261 Martindale Rd., St. Catharines, ON L2W 1A1**

ONE TO ANOTHER

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Write to:
#302, 1502-2nd Ave. S.
Lethbridge, AB T1J 4A2

Job Opportunities

Dutch speaking, live-in caregiver needed immediately for senior lady in Holland Christian Homes, Brampton, Ont.
Call John at (416) 293-2938

Faculty Openings
Calvin College

The college is seeking applications for openings beginning **September 1995** in the following departments:

Accounting/finance
Art
Biology
Chemistry
Classics
Communication Arts and Sciences
Criminal Justice
Developmental Mathematics
Education
English
Geology, Geography and Environmental Studies
History
Mathematics and Computer Science
Music (theory and strings)
Philosophy
Physics
Political Science
Psychology
Religion
Science Education
Spanish

Calvin College seeks faculty members who affirm the Christian faith as expressed by the Reformed creeds and have academic and personal qualifications for teaching and scholarship. Applications from North American minorities in any discipline are strongly encouraged. Interested persons or persons who wish to make nominations should correspond with the chairperson of the respective department at:

Calvin College
3201 Burton Street SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546 USA
Calvin College is an equal opportunity employer.

ADMINISTRATOR

Langley Christian School is in need of an **administrator** for its new Middle School/High School campus. This new facility will house approximately 180 students from Grades 6-9 in September 1995 and incorporate an additional grade level in each subsequent year so that it will become a 6-12 campus of approximately 400 students in four years time.

LCS is looking for an educational leader who is a committed Christian and who has the experience, vision and the skills necessary to lead this school during these exciting years of development and growth.

Position commences **August 1, 1995**, or earlier.

Inquiries/applications to:
Leo Smit, Principal
c/o 21789-50th Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 3T2
Telephone (604) 533-2222 Fax (604) 533-7276

Seeking a Pastor

The **Christian Reformed Church** of **Georgetown, Ont.**, is seeking an ordained pastor to work in team ministry, leading us in preaching, teaching and pastoral care, with proven ability for and commitment to youth ministry. A church profile is available upon request. Contact the **Calling Committee, Georgetown Chr. Ref. Church, P.O. Box 45, Georgetown, ON L7G 4T1.**

Dordt College
FACULTY POSITIONS

Dordt College is seeking Christian academicians for openings beginning August 1995 in the following areas:

Agri-business: (possible opening) farm management, marketing, and applied agricultural economics

Biology: (one-year position) genetics, microbiology, botany, and ecology

Business Administration: management and marketing or other areas

Chemistry: (possible opening) analytical, physical, inorganic, and general chemistry

Economics: introductory and upper level courses

Engineering: electrical engineering

Health, Physical Education, Recreation (HPER): exercise science, health, coaching theory, women's volleyball

Dordt College seeks individuals who are committed to a Reformed, biblical perspective and educational philosophy and have academic and personal qualifications for teaching and scholarship. Dordt College strongly encourages applications from women, minorities, and disabled persons.

Send letter of interest and curriculum vitae to Dr. Rockne McCarthy, 498 Fourth Avenue NE, Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697; phone: 712-722-6333; fax: 712-722-4496; e-mail: rockne@dordt.edu

Holland Christian Homes
7900 McLaughlin Rd. S., Brampton, ON L6V 3N2

Position available for

Full-time Activities Assistant

Hours of Shift
60 hours every two weeks
9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday to Friday
plus four hours extra one Saturday per month.

Qualifications
A certificate in a course related to activities and programming for the elderly is necessary.

Resume to:
Please apply in writing or send resume to **Wilma Wamsteeker**, Activation Co-ordinator, to the above address by **January 30, 1995.**

Calvin College

The **Education Department** of **Calvin College** seeks candidates for a tenure-track faculty position in at least **psychology of education, introduction to teaching**, and **elementary supervision**. Responsibilities include teaching courses in these areas, advising students, supervising elementary student teachers, and providing leadership to surrounding school districts.

Qualifications include: 1) an earned doctorate (or ABD) in psychology of education or a closely related field; 2) K-12 classroom teaching experience (secondary experience is preferred); and 3) a scholarship agenda. Women and minority candidates are encouraged to apply.

Calvin is a Christian college within the Reformed tradition and is an equal employment opportunity employer. Interested applicants should forward a letter stating qualifications and vita to **Gloria Goris Stronks, Staff Development Committee, Education Department, Calvin College, 3201 Burton, S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49546.**

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Classifieds

Miscellaneous | **Miscellaneous** | **Teachers** | **Job Opportunities** | **Job Opportunities**

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Your tax-sheltered nest egg... our campus financing.

1994 and 1995 Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) & Retirement Investment Fund (RIF) contributions and transfers of existing accounts are welcome.

Arrangements are simple: just write or call Redeemer College—we'll do the rest.

Phone: **1-800-263-6467** *(local: 648-2131)*

Write: *Stewardship Office, Redeemer College, 777 Hwy 53 E., Ancaster, ON L9K 1J4*

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Your One-Stop Travel Agency

HOUSTON, B.C.: The **Houston Chr. School** is an expanding school that needs to fill the following positions:

1. Principal/Teacher
2. Grade 11 teacher with area specialisation in English/Social studies
3. Part-time Kindergarten teacher

Interested teachers are encouraged to contact the school:

Houston Chr. School
Doyle Smiens, Principal
Box 237, Houston, BC V0J 1Z0
Phone: (604) 845-7736
Fax: (604) 845-7736

Are we your new church?

Members of Cephas Christian Reformed Church are praying that the Lord will lead the man of His choosing to come and be our new pastor. We are praying daily for our future pastor and many are committed to regular, intercessory prayer on his behalf after his arrival.

Our church is located in Peterborough, Ont., and consists of 130 families. We enjoy a blend of traditional and modern worship styles. Our desire is for a pastor who loves to preach God's Word and, specifically, senses God's call to come to Peterborough!

For further information, contact:
Cephas Christian Reformed Church
220 Goodfellow Road, Peterborough, ON Canada K9J 5X3
Phone: (705) 743-4904

Calendar of Events

Jan. 13-15 Dordt College Concert Choir 1995 Winter Tour. **Jan. 13:** 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Bowmanville**, Ont.; **Jan. 14:** 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge**, Ont.; **Jan. 15:** 8 p.m., First CRC, **Sarnia**, Ont.

Jan. 13 Piano recital by Redeemer College alumnus Fred De Haan (works by Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, etc.), 8 p.m., RC auditorium, **Ancaster**, Ont. Free-will offering.

Jan. 14 Concert by the "Dordt College Concert Choir," 8 p.m., Maranatha CRC, **Cambridge**, Ont.

Jan. 25 Public meeting on abuse prevention in churches, with report to Classis Toronto and talk by Beth Swagman, CRC Abuse Prevention co-ordinator. At 8 p.m., Second CRC (444 Steeles Ave. W.), **Brampton**, Ont.

Jan. 27 "Water to Wine: Celebration of Learning," CRC Chaplaincy 20th anniversary banquet for U. of A. students, past and present. Speaker: Dr. Deborah Stienstra. At 6:30 p.m., West End CRC, **Edmonton**, Alta. Contact Dr. Tom Oosterhuis at (403) 492-5327 or 483-8153.

Jan. 28 Organ concert by Christiaan Teeuwsen (works by Widor, Reger and Liszt), 8 p.m., Centenary United Church, 24 Main St. E., **Hamilton**, Ont. Tickets: (905) 648-2131.

Jan. 30-Feb. 10 CSS's Harry Houtman in **Alberta.**

Feb. 8 Second annual "Church and the Law" seminar, 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Queensway Cathedral, 1536 The Queensway, **Etobicoke**, Ont. Last year more than 570 ministers and church leaders attended! The 1995 seminar is co-ordinated in conjunction with the Canadian Council of Christian Charities. Info. and registration: CCCC, Elmira, Ont. Phone: (519) 669-5137, fax: (519) 669-3291.

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required by **London District Christian Secondary School.** Applicants will ideally possess a vision of Christian education; good telephone manner; strong interpersonal skills; word processing and computer skills; strong organizational skills and be detail-oriented. Previous experience will be an asset. A job description is available on request.

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London District Chr. Secondary School
24 Braesyde Ave., London, ON N5W 1V3
Phone: (519) 455-4360 Fax: (519) 455-4364

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Is Klein man of the future for PCs?

World news

Carl D. Tuyl

bytes

Page 5 of the *New York Times*, Jan. 1, Sunday edition, shows a picture of Alberta's Premier Ralph Klein. "A Canadian austerity program seen as a model for elsewhere," says the story. Polls show that Klein's Conservatives would receive 57 per cent of the vote if elections were to be held at this time. Klein's government aims to eliminate the province's deficit by next year. Is Klein the man of the future for the Mulroney-mauled PC-ers? As Mordechai said to Esther: "Who knows?"

★★★

The Fraser Institute, a Vancouver-based research group, estimates the underground economy to be somewhere around $120 billion. Finance Minister Martin would dearly love to tap into that reservoir of potential tax revenue. NDP deputy leader Nelson Riss said that 2,000 Canadians who earned more than $100,000 or more paid no income tax in 1992. "That included," he said, "340 fat cats who earned a hefty quarter of a million dollars or more than that." Will Mr. Riis be the next NDP leader?

★★★

Canada is in the market for some one-owner submarines with low milage. England has four of those items for sale at the reduced price of $1 billion. The Navy is considering the sale. Shipyards on the East Coast are bickering about who will get the maintenance contract for those underwater kayaks. There is more naval news for 1995: the royal yacht *Brittania* will be mothballed. Now there's a little barge some people might want to buy!

★★★

The *United Church Observer* spotted this announcement in a bulletin: "Tonight's sermon: 'What is Hell?' Come early and listen to our choir practice."

★★★

One more month and the great Canadian cable rip-off will cost you $3.91 monthly, unless you cancel, which will bring the wrath of Rogers Cablesystems Ltd. upon your tube by cutting out some of the few channels worth watching. The British Columbia government might introduce legislation which would make the negative billing illegal. While they're at it, they should also do something about that $10,000,000 sweepstakes for which both my wife and I received glitzy invitations.

★★★

The pundits and political prophets have all made their predictions for the coming year. There seems to be a general opinion that Quebec will not separate from Canada. If that is true we will have a very disappointed Frère Jacques to deal with. The Liberal government called for three byelections for Feb. 13 in Quebec. Two seats were vacated by MPs in exchange for fat plums, and the government will run high-profile francophones in those three ridings.

★★★

The Agriculture Ministry expects that when 1994 farm receipts are totalled up, canola will have overtaken wheat as Canada's biggest agricultural earner.

★★★

P.E.I. was isolated when 100 km winds roared across the Northumberland Strait and ferries could not make the crossing.

★★★

The city of Beijing is not known for sanitary luxury. All it has for those in nature's need (among whom are the local residents who have no indoor plumbing) are long rows of squat holes with no doors and no running water. The government announced the Great Public Toilet Design Contest and the winners were recently announced. Makes you swallow a lot of complaints about Canada, eh?

★★★

Eulalia Rodriguez is having a hard time. People are calling her names just because she receives, legally, that is, $1 million in U.S. government assistance annually. Eulalia takes care of 14 children, 74 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren. That's a lot of mouths to feed for Eulalia, and that in a six bedroom, three-storey apartment. They probably sleep in shifts.

★★★

Boris' bombers have been pounding away at Grozny, but so far the city has refused to surrender. More blood has to be spilled. The bloodshed in Chechnya is not increasing Yeltsin's popularity, at home or abroad. There are presidential elections scheduled for 1996 in Russia.

★★★

Muslim Bosnians and their "Christian" Serbian enemies are going to try to stop killing each other for four months. This will take a lot of will-power. Sarajevo has now endured 1,000 days of shelling, and the fire of snipers who shoot from the hills at anything that moves.

★★★

Mexico is trying to protect its currency from going the way of the ruble. In Moscow it takes a gazillion rubles to buy a Big Mac. The Canadian dollar was also sold for bargain basement prices during the past week. One hundred Yankee dollars cost $145.00 Cdn. Our dollar did not fare very well against European currency either. Tourists who visit Europe might as well take a pair of extra shoelaces along. They won't be able to buy them there if the dollar keeps falling.

★★★

Judy Pruitt, 23, of Houston has six children by six different men. Four have been taken away by Child Protective Services. When asked by a reporter why she continues to have children, Pruitt answered: "I have to keep replacing the ones they take."

★★★

Italy's President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro is looking for someone to form a new

government. Applications are now being received. Anyone interested? It is short term, temporary employment, though. Italy's lira is in decline and the country's debt is far in excess of the nation's annual income.

★★★

Be kind to one another: a child once said people are the words with which God tells his story.

Carl Tuyl is executive director of the Ontario Multifaith Council on Spiritual and Religious Care.

Maranatha Homes Burlington, Ont.

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News

St. Catharines pastor loses mother and brother in Liberian civil war

Alan Doerksen

ST. CATHARINES — On December 15, the mother and brother of Pastor Dongo Pewee, of Maranatha CRC in St. Catharines, Ont., were killed in the latest wave of violence in Liberia. Civil war has been raging there since Christmas Eve 1989.

"We don't know exactly who is responsible" for the deaths, says Pewee, whose family lives in a suburb of Monrovia, Liberia's capital. But he suspects his mother, Mary Ann Konah Pewee, and his brother, Robert, were shot by rebels connected with Charles Zulu, one of Liberia's rebel leaders. Witnesses of the shootings say that the people responsible "were speaking Charles Zulu's language," says Pewee.

Two other members of Pewee's family were hurt in the rebel attacks. "One of my brothers is seriously wounded in the hospital [and] my father is hallucinating," says Pewee. He has stayed in touch with his family by phone, and hopes to bring his father and injured brother to Canada, where they can get better medical care.

Pastor Dongo Pewee

According to Pewee, Liberia's civil war started in 1989, after Charles Taylor, one of the main rebel leaders, embezzled government money and fled to the U.S. Later, he was extradited from the U.S. and returned to Liberia, where he got help from Libya's Moammar Gadhafi in starting a rebellion against the government of Liberia. "The agenda of Moammar Gadhafi was to spread Islam," says Pewee.

When Taylor's forces reached Monrovia, they split into two factions. In 1990, the Economic Union of West African States sent peacekeeping troops to Monrovia. The government and the rebel splinter group accepted the presence of the peacekeepers, but Taylor's forces fought them. Then in 1992, Taylor "launched a massive campaign" to take over Monrovia, and 5,000 people were killed, says Pewee. Now, Taylor is based in neighboring Ivory Coast.

In July 1994, another faction led by Zulu took over the presidential palace in Monrovia. He later escaped from the city.

Diane Slager, a former missionary in Liberia with Christian Reformed World Missions, describes the civil war as "a power struggle... it's been pretty bloody and violent the whole time." There are now "between eight and 12 major factions [with] more and more splintering between groups," says Slager. She and her husband, Jim, lived and worked in the interior of Liberia for nine years, until June 1990. CRWM no longer works in Liberia. The Slagers are friends of Pewee.

Pewee has been an intern at Maranatha since July 1994.

News Digest

Unbelief no reason to dismiss

TORONTO — The *Globe and Mail* reported on Dec. 31: "The Church of England dismissed a vicar who does not believe in God, sparking protests from 65 of his fellow clergymen. The angry clerics say: 'It reverses a long Church of England tradition that tolerates and values a wide range of views.'"

Doll teaches tough lessons

SAN DIEGO, Calif. — A San Diego aerospace engineer has come up with a teaching aid which gives teenaged girls a dose of reality. It aims to make young women think twice about getting pregnant and using drugs, reports *Newsweek*.

Students must take care of a life-like vinyl "drug-addicted" doll called "Baby Think It Over." A sophisticated, programmable electronics system in the doll's innards causes it to scream and shake violently like a real crack-addicted baby. A student must hold the doll for 10 to 35 minutes before its wailing stops. The dolls are also programmed to cry at random intervals, imitating infants' sleeping and eating patterns. Teachers can track how long a doll cried before it was held; if neglected an "abuse" light comes on.

So far, 1,000 of the dolls are being used in American high schools. Engineer Rick Jurmain designed Baby Think It Over in response to a request for special help from a San Diego drug counselling agency.

South African Eastern Transvaal government cancels religious questionnaire

Richard Nyberg

GABORONE, Botswana (NNI)--Officials in South Africa's Eastern Transvaal Province have cancelled a questionnaire sent to religious groups last summer after several churches raised serious objections that the survey may seek to register or control Christian groups.

Questionnaires were sent out requesting information on membership, leadership and activities in the Eastern Transvaal, one of nine new administrative regions set up after South Africa's first democratic elections last April.

The questionnaire also sought feedback from church leaders on the establishment of a "religious desk" to serve as a link between provincial authorities and the religious bodies.

"A lot of people attached much different meanings to [the questionnaire], as if you are trying to register or control them," government spokesperson Oupa Pilane told NNI. "Actually it wasn't the intention of the desk to ever have churches registered."

He said after canceling the questionnaires, officials responsible for the religious desk began a process of holding consultations with churches in order to "explain exactly what is the intention of the religious desk" and discussing "whether they like the desk or not."

Conservative Christians worried

He noted that responses and proposals from several returned questionnaires, coupled with consultations with university theologians, helped them decide to abandon the forms.

There has been no formal registration of churches in the country for the past 30 years. On learning of the desk, many conservative Christians expressed concern that the move may be the first of many in an overall trend by authorities to control the activities of religious groups.

A letter addressed to all religious leaders in the province by the Executive Office of Minister Without Portfolio Steve Mbuyisa stated the purpose of the desk would be "to promote co-operation between the various religious groups on the one hand and the provincial government on the other."

Organizers of the religious desk say their initial objectives included gathering "essential formal information about each religious register or institution or denomination, especially to compile a register of names and addresses."

Many Christians, including Rev. E.H. Stegen of the Kwasizabant ministers' conference committee and Rev. Kenneth Meshoe, a member of parliament and leader of the African Christian Democratic Party, have called for the desk itself to be scrapped and the questionnaires destroyed.

Eastern Transvaal is the first of South Africa's provinces to set up such a desk. Madala Masuku, the head of the media section at the provincial premier's office, told NNI earlier that other provinces were likely to follow suit.

Paranoia can go either way

A reader of the Guardian Weekly *asked the following question:*

Is there an opposite to paranoia, i.e., being under the mistaken belief that everyone is out to help you?

The following answer was given by John Spend of Derbyshire:

"Both major psychiatric classificatory systems (the American DSM IV and the W.H.O. ICD.10) have dropped the term paranoia from their pages as it has lost any specific meaning, replacing it with a group of 'paranoid disorders.'

"The term 'paranoid' refers to a persistent belief that others regard one in a very special way. Whilst the majority of paranoid people harbor delusions of persecution in relation to others, another small group believe in their own grandiosity and importance and are quite unable to accept that others may dislike or despise them.

"The essence of a paranoid disorder is in the presence of delusional ideas which in turn leads the afflicted to the erroneous conclusion that the other either adores or abhors him. Consequently there is no need for an opposite term, for it encompasses both negative and positive elements by definition."